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U.S. to take next step on warming

EMISSIONS Putting his prestige on the line, U.S. President Barack Obama will personally commit the U.S. to a goal of substantially cutting greenhouse gases at next month's Copenhagen climate summit, insisting America is ready to tackle global warming despite intense disagreement in Congress.

Obama will attend the start of the conference Dec. 9, before heading to Oslo to accept the Nobel Peace Prize. He will "put on the table" a U.S. commitment to cut emissions by 17 per cent over the next decade, on the way to reducing heat-trapping pollution by 80 per cent by mid-century, the White House said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News on the Move
What's this barcode for?
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Metro Homes pg 48

Schmoozing in Yorkville

On the web
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Charity **Model behaviour**

CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES

Spanish model Ariadne Artiles attends a UNICEF and AIDS fundraising event yesterday in Madrid, Spain. Artiles' charity donated more than $83,000 in the fight against AIDS.

Taste of freedom

Canadian released after 15 months in captivity

Canadian journalist Amanda Lindhout, freed after 15 months of captivity in war-torn Somalia, said yesterday she was isolated, beaten and tortured, and dreamed of walking through Vancouver's Stanley Park to stay sane and not lose hope.

Amanda Lindhout

"My day was sitting on a floor in a corner, 24 hours a day for the last 15 months," Lindhout said in an interview with CTV from Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia.

"There were times I was beaten, I was tortured," said the freelance journalist, her voice breaking as she described her days in a dark, windowless room.

Lindhout, from Sylvan Lake in central Alberta, and Australian photographer Nigel Brennan were kidnapped Aug. 23, 2008. Somali officials said they were released yesterday, 459 days after their ordeal began.

Stories and reports conflicted about how much, if any, ransom was paid and by whom.

Lindhout said the families of the two hostages paid some money for her release, but didn't know how much.

"There were some pretty dark moments," she said. "It was the idea of coming home, a reunion with my family that kept me going.

"In that darkness, I would try to escape in my mind to a sunny place, usually Vancouver. I would imagine running around Stanley Park, and that would keep me going."

Lindhout said two weeks ago there was movement in the talks, which eventually led to her and Brennan being handed over to negotiators in Mogadishu yesterday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Little convicted on two counts of first-degree murder

Christopher Little dropped his head slightly but said nothing after a jury found him guilty of two counts of first-degree murder for slashing the throat of his estranged wife and strangling another woman.

One juror burst into tears when Justice Michelle Fuerst praised them for their efforts during the grisly murder trial.

The verdict came on the third day of deliberations. First-degree murder carries an automatic life term, with no eligibility for parole for 25 years.

Little's wife Julie Crocker's throat was slashed Feb. 12, 2007, in their marital bed on Larkin Avenue in Markham, while physiotherapist Paula Menendez's body was found hanging in his garage.

The Crown painted Little, 38, as deranged and obsessed after the breakup of his marriage of nine years and his wife's new relationship with sportscaster Rick Ralph, who had been married to Menendez.

The Crown argued that Little murdered Menendez, whom he barely knew, to frame her for the Crocker murder and to hurt Ralph.

Families of both murdered women said they felt deeply hurt by how their loved ones were portrayed.

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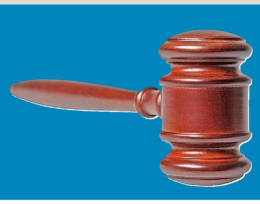

TTC shooter convicted of assault

A man accused of firing a shot that blinded a TTC bus driver has been acquitted of attempted murder, but convicted instead of the lesser offence of aggravated assault. A jury also found Malcolm Chalmers, 23, guilty yesterday of using a firearm in the commission of an indictable offence. The driver, Jaime Pereira, was shot in his bus on Oct. 15, 2005, seconds after he called a dispatcher for help. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Tomorrow's Metro

Comment
John Sewell writes about local issues facing the GTA in Urban Compass.

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Video Former top soldier Rick Hillier claims he never saw torture documents at heart of Colvin testimony at **metronews.ca/canada**

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Shops latest TTC ticket casualty

Retailers say stocks not being replenished fast enough to meet rider demand

Already frustrated by restricted token sales and long lines at ticket booths, TTC riders are now being stymied at their local convenience stores.

Several independent TTC ticket retailers have run out of tickets and aren't being re-stocked as quickly as usual.

"I don't have anything since Monday, and customers are really, really upset," said Mukarram Ali, owner of Presse Internationale on Queen Street East in the Beach. Ali said he usually receives his shipment of $2,000 worth of tickets and tokens the day after he makes his order.

"Now, when I called them Monday, they said Wednesday." But by yesterday afternoon, Ali said he still hadn't received his order and wasn't counting on it coming before the end of the day.

Independent retailers appear to be the latest casualty of the TTC's looming fare hike.

MICHAEL STUPAR/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mukarram Ali is the owner of Presse International, a magazine store in the Beach. He's holding new TTC tickets he ordered Monday and received yesterday afternoon

Ticket hoarding led the TTC to first restrict, then halt altogether, the sale of tokens. On Monday, they introduced temporary adult tickets to keep the TTC's supply flowing and thwart token hoarding and limit losses for the commission.

But some commuters, like Martine Vieira, have had to pay full fare at the ticket box, because the operator ran out.

Vieira, a legal assistant, waited more than 30 minutes at St. Andrew station on Monday and Tuesday, and then had to pay full fare anyway, when the operator said they had run out of tickets.

"I just wish they'd organize themselves better," she said. "The TTC is not making this easy at all."

Later, at Yorkdale station, Vieira said the operator let everyone go for free because she had run out of tickets.

Byung-Sung Song, owner of Starbank Convenience at College and August streets., said he still has a healthy supply of tickets, but he's noticed it has been taking longer to get his orders filled. "Usually it was one day, now it's two days or three days."

At Sun's Milk, on Kingston Road near Victoria Park, owner Seoung-mi Kang said she ran out of tickets Friday and hasn't been re-stocked since.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Doc wants debate on publicly funded services

The president of the Canadian Medical Association is calling for a national debate on what health services should be covered by public funds and at what level.

Dr. Anne Doig says a new definition is needed of what is necessary to ensure a healthy life for Canadians.

At the same time the doctors' association is going ahead and defining that itself, developing a "patient quality charter."

Doig says the charter is a "clear vision for quality care" that will lay out what is needed to provide the better health care aging baby boomers will demand.

She told the Economic Club of Canada in Toronto it's not doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals that are failing Canadians but health-care insurance.

She says in the 1960s, physician and hospital services made up 57 per cent of total health spending but that has dropped to 41 per cent. THE CANADIAN PRESS

System needs cash influx for boomers

- Dr. Anne Doig says health care will need more money, which will have to be raised from either higher taxes or alternative sources of funding. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

SUIT A company that's suing Ontario's lottery agency over a casino power plant is offering to drop its $355-million suit and buy the $81-million facility. Buttcon Energy says it will drop its action against the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. if the agency will agree to sell the Windsor plant for $71 million. Buttcon says its offer would get taxpayers off the hook for a potentially costly legal battle. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Man dies in car accident on Highway 401

A crash on Highway 401 near Trenton has claimed the life of a man in his 30s from Toronto. Police say the car was headed east when it rolled into the south ditch a number of times at about 7 p.m. Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Six SUVs stolen on same night

THEFT Six residents in the Davisville area woke up to discover their cars had been stolen from their driveways early yesterday morning.

Police were called to the neighbourhood between 7 and 8:30 a.m. yesterday morning, finding six Toyota Highlanders had been taken overnight from different homes between Mt. Pleasant Road and Bayview Avenue near Eglinton Avenue East.

Const. Tony Vella said it is still unclear how the vehicles were stolen, but police are currently speaking to witnesses in the area and reviewing security camera footage for possible clues.

One possibility being investigated is the use of a computer program that could crack the door code on keyless vehicles.

Two or more people are suspected to be responsible for the thefts, but police have no description of suspects yet.

Vella advises residents in the area to take necessary precautions with their vehicles.

"If you have a garage make sure you place your car in the garage. If you have an alarm system or a locking device for your steering wheel use it, that way it reduces the chances of you being victimized," he said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

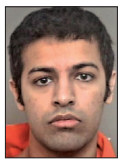
RICK EGLINTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICES

Paula King is shown in her driveway where the family car, a Toyota Highlander, was stolen overnight by car thieves.

No plan to arm jail guards after escape

Officials say they will learn from breakout

The Ontario government sees no need to arm jail guards who escort prisoners outside of secure institutions despite a daring escape in which two armed and masked men helped a prisoner get away from guards at a Hamilton hospital.



Fawad Nouri

Fawad Nouri, 25, was leaving Hamilton General Hospital with two jail guards Tuesday when two armed men helped him escape by overpowering the guards and stealing their van, which was quickly ditched for another vehicle.

"At this point in time, I would not be in favour of having jail guards carry guns," Community Safety Minister Rick Bartolucci said outside the legislature yesterday.

"They are in very, very close proximity to prisoners (and) carrying a gun brings about a whole other set of circumstances that may have to be dealt with."

There are about 70,000 cases each year when prisoners come and go from institutions with guards, but only five escapes in the past five years, noted Bartolucci.

"We've learned from the five and we'll learn from this one, but I think correctional officers are doing a very, very good job."

Nouri was in a Hamilton detention centre after being wounded in a shootout with police last January following an alleged armed robbery at a Tim Hortons restaurant.

Hamilton police have released video surveillance images of the suspects believed to be involved in helping Nouri escape.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

LAWSUIT Class-action lawsuits have been filed across Canada on behalf of consumers who bought drop-side cribs now subject to a massive North American recall. The action, filed in six provinces, including Ontario so far, seeks a full refund for consumers who bought the cribs manufactured by Stork Craft Manufacturing of Richmond, B.C. The recall comes after at least 15 infants, including three in Canada, were trapped in the drop-side part of the product. In the U.S., four deaths have been linked to the cribs, the latest in May of this year.

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Nintendo

Man hit by vehicle while crossing street

A pedestrian suffered life-threatening head injuries yesterday after he ran in front of a Honda Accord at Ellesmere Road and Midland Avenue in Scarborough, police say. The man, in his 20s, was struck while crossing the intersection on a red light after leaving a Subway restaurant. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Parties preparing for 2011

Campaign leaders already being chosen for upcoming vote

Ontario voters can expect a harder-edged election campaign in 2011 as the Progressive Conservatives organize their efforts to unseat the Liberals under the guidance of the man who led Tim Hudak's successful leadership bid, observers say.

Hudak won a decisive victory to lead the party earlier this year with a campaign run by one of the party's most experienced political operatives, Mark Spiro.

Numerous party sources tell The Canadian Press that Hudak has decided to hold on tight to his lucky charm when it comes to running the next election campaign.

That suggests voters heading to the polls on Oct. 6, 2011 will see a much tougher stance on the hustings than the party took during the 2007 contest under John Tory's leadership. University of Toronto political science professor Graham White says the Liberals are more than prepared to respond in kind.

"The Hudak style that we saw in the leadership campaign, the Hudak style that we see in the current campaign against the HST is certainly give no quarter, endless very severe criticisms, good sound bites that last just a few seconds to get the message across," White said.

Dalton McGuinty

Dalton McGuinty has also chosen the tried and true to lead his next campaign in selecting Don Guy, his former chief of staff and now president of the public opinion research firm Pollara.

"Both of the campaign managers are very seasoned, experienced pros," White said. "It's going to be a very tough election. "Guy ... is not just experienced but has proven himself as ... someone who understands the world is constantly changing and ... is prepared to adapt to what the other guy is doing."

Elliott Anderson, director of strategic planning for the Ontario NDP, says while the party has not named its campaign manager it is getting ready for the race.

"Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath has, over the summer and fall, been working closely with party supporters from other provincial NDP sections ... to cull ideas and develop strategy for the next election," Anderson said.

The fact that the governing and Opposition parties already have their campaign managers in place "may be a sign that, like in the United States, the permanent campaign is here to stay," said David Docherty, a politics expert at Wilfrid Laurier University.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Wards Island **Foggy skyline**

CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The CN Tower, seen from Wards Island, is half hidden in the fog that covered Toronto yesterday afternoon.

Presto! GO tests new fare system

FARES About 75 Oakville-area commuters will become guinea pigs Monday for the latest phase in the province's Presto fare card pilot.

As the TTC struggles with token hoarding, the Presto users will be able to load up their cards online, at their local GO station or by phone, then tap the card on readers placed along their route to pay the fare. While 75 commuters using the Oakville and Bronte GO stations have been recruited to give the latest version a trial run, project heads hope to have 500 cards in circulation in the ensuing two weeks.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

City, port ready to bury hatchet?

TRANSPORTATION After years of acrimony and legal battles, the City of Toronto and the Toronto Port Authority may finally be ready to make peace.

The key appears to be the Toronto Transit Commission's need to get its hands on 18 acres of port authority-owned land near Ashbridges Bay to build a new facility to house streetcars.

City staff are seeking council's OK to settle long-standing disputes with the authority while securing the land the TTC needs.

The staff report notes the city has withheld $11.7 million in payments it owes the port authority, arguing that the port authority owes the city $37 million in tax arrears.

$350M The new TTC carhouse, to be built on Port Authority-owned land, comes with a price tag of $350 million.

And the city has refused to pay $3 million in "harbour user fees" — charged at the rate of $10 every time a city ferry makes a crossing between the island and mainland.

It's good news that the TTC may be able to acquire a storage and maintenance site for new streetcars, said Councillor Joe Mihevc, a TTC commissioner.

"We need that in our possession ASAP, in order for us to be able to take the new vehicles when they come off the assembly line," Mihevc said of the new carhouse, expected to cost $350 million.

The new cars will be about twice as long as the existing models and couldn't be housed in the TTC's old facilities on Queen St. and Roncesvalles Ave.

The Port Authority land is the TTC's preferred choice among six potential locations, including 629 Eastern Ave., a mothballed film studio that was also the site of a controversial big box retail development, nixed by the Ontario Municipal Board.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Oshawa plant to build Buick

AUTO General Motors confirmed yesterday that its Oshawa assembly plant will produce the company's all-new 2011 Buick Regal beginning in the first quarter of that year.

The 2011 Regal is a mid-size sport sedan based on the design of GM's Opel Insignia, selected the 2009 European car of the year.

Production of the new model, first reported as a possibility several months ago, is the latest in a string of positive news for GM plants in Canada.

The Oshawa plant has been running overtime shifts since June to produce GM's popular Chevrolet Camaro and, beginning in 2011, will produce the Camaro Convertible.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ingersoll plant

- Other good news for Canadian plants includes the recent addition of a third shift plus overtime at the CAMI plant in Ingersoll, Ont., to keep up with demand for the Chevrolet Equinox and GMC Terrain.

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Norwall announces loss of $1.5M

The Norwall Group Inc. has reported a net loss of $1.5 million in the third quarter ended Sept. 30, more than double the $719,000 it lost in the comparable period in 2008. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Drivers still ignoring hand-held law: Cops

Ban on driving with devices is 1-month-old

A driver zooming down a highway in Ottawa while texting with a BlackBerry in his lap is just one of the examples police are citing of people ignoring Ontario's ban on hand-held devices.

As of today, the province's prohibition on the use of hand-held devices by drivers to talk, email or text unless they're making a 911 call or have pulled off the road will have been in effect for one month.

Ontario is the fourth province to enact such a ban, following Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec and Nova Scotia, and some motorists still aren't getting the message, police say.

And at least one big-city police force says the new law has made surreptitious texting in traffic more dangerous than before.

"People one month ago would hold their BlackBerry device either right up to their ear or in front of them on the dashboard and do their texting," said Toronto police Sgt. Tim Burrows.

"Now they're trying to hide it, which is taking their eyes away from the road even longer than before."

In the age of multi-tasking it seems there are those having a hard time giving up a dangerous habit.

Sgt. Al Ferris, with the Ottawa Police Service Traffic Escort Unit, was riding his motorcycle on the Queensway, a 400 series highway, last week when he looked in his rear-view mirror and saw the driver behind him slowing down, gaining on him, then slowing down in the fast lane — all the while looking down between his legs.

"So I stop my bike in the middle of the lane and I went back to him, and sure enough the CrackBerry is right between his legs," said Ferris.

The driver, who had been going about 120 kilometres per hour, at first denied he was doing anything. The man knew about the legislation but also about the three-month grace period where police are mostly issuing warnings instead of tickets, Ferris added.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

$500 Starting Feb. 1, Ontario drivers could be fined up to $500 for violating the rules. But drivers who think the three-month education campaign gives them "carte blanche" to keep gabbing and driving well into the winter could face a hard lesson. While police in Ontario have generally been talking to drivers about staying off the phone instead of handing out tickets, motorists can still be charged.

Carols **Much hosts sing for charity**

JOHN R. KENNEDY/FOR METRO TORONTO

Students Cyann Dias, left, and Ashtyn Verbanac stop to sing Christmas carols with MuchMusic hosts Sarah Taylor and Jesse Giddings, inset, who dressed as reindeer inside the Eaton Centre yesterday to help raise money for AIDS-affected communities through the Stephen Lewis Foundation.

News in brief

ZOO A grizzly bear attempted to break out of his holding pen at the Toronto Zoo early Tuesday morning, sending zoo officials scrambling to repair the damaged building and fencing. "Another hour and he would have been out," said Tony Meuleman, senior zookeeper.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mom gives impact statement

STATEMENT A girl was sexually molested several times by a 25-year family friend, a man they looked up to as a police hero, a court heard yesterday.

Donald MacCallum

"You wore a badge to serve and protect but you were the person we needed to be protected from," the mother of a 16-year-old who had been molested several times when she was five or six told Donald MacCallum in a victim impact statement.

In September, the respected Toronto police sergeant pleaded guilty to eight counts of sexual interference and two counts of sexual exploitation.

Justice Peter Wilkie will sentence MacCallum in January for sexual offences against 10 girls who were aged five to 15 between 1996 and 2004.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cops make gun arrests
Peel region police have arrested three men after undercover officers posed as the buyers of a machine-gun. THE CANADIAN PRESS

ANDREW WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Potential buyers lineup across from the Intercontinental Hotel yesterday holding signs in a dispute about condo purchases on Bloor Street West.

Agents duel over sales

Competing lines of real estate agents waiting to buy new luxury condos turned ugly on Bloor Street yesterday with jabs, shouts, threats and accusations of queue-jumping.

Some of the agents, who lined both sides of Bloor at Bedford Avenue, had been waiting for more than a week to buy units in the X2 development at Jarvis and Charles streets. Others arrived Tuesday night.

By yesterday, there were three lines of potential buyers claiming the right to have first crack at the condos.

Around 8 a.m., a representative for builder Great Gulf Homes threw two of the three warring lineups into a fury by declaring their long waits and placeholding invalid.

Chanting "X2, unfair," and holding up freshly made signs with the word 'unfair' on them, the agents who had waited the longest protested the decision.

Now, some of the brokers that were left in the cold are considering taking legal action against the developer.

Sunny Shang said he was the first to line up on Nov. 15. He was outraged that other people who "just showed up at 11 last night," were going to get the first chance to buy the units.

"We're very upset. This is very unfair," he said. "They knew about our list and ignored it."

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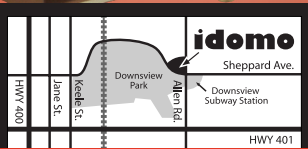

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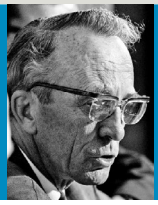
Mother, daughter die in highway collision
A mother and her one-year-old daughter are dead following a two-vehicle collision on Highway 10 between Dundalk and Shelburne. The crash occurred around 8 p.m. Tuesday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada



Daughter seeks RCMP files on Douglas

Actress Shirley Douglas says decades-old RCMP Security Service files on her father Tommy Douglas, left, should be made public. In an affidavit, she says her family believes the iconic Canadian politician would have wanted the archival material released. The government is refusing to turn over all the documents on the socialist politician, essentially on the grounds of national security. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fake passports, real arrests

Alleged members of huge counterfeiting ring nabbed

It's unclear how many fake Canadian passports are in circulation, police said yesterday after arresting alleged members of a massive counterfeiting ring that produced high-quality, fake government ID cards.

The RCMP stressed there was no evidence any of those documents had fallen into the hands of terrorists.

Police made dozens of raids in Ontario and Quebec, which even saw parents at three Montreal daycares asked to retrieve their kids when the centres were shut down as alleged counterfeiting labs.

About 400 officers conducted raids at 39 places yesterday, and 29 people were arrested.

PETER MCCABE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Montreal police officer Raphael Bergeron explains to a mother that her child's daycare in Montreal was closed yesterday. Police conducted seizures in at least three daycare centres.

It is unclear just how many fake Canadian passports are in circulation. The passports allegedly produced by the ring would be tough to distinguish from the real thing.

Another part of the dual-structured ring allegedly specialized in producing sophisticated counterfeits of hard-to-copy products like drivers' licences from multiple provinces and from American states.

They also allegedly produced other fake IDs like permanent resident cards, social-insurance cards and health cards.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Many Manitoba nursing homes not meeting standards: Report

AUDIT An investigation by Manitoba's auditor general has found that more than half of the province's 126 nursing homes failed to meet four of the five core standards of care set out by the government.

Carol Bellringer says the homes had failed by the end of last year to meet basic standards on the use of restraints, care plans for residents, medication reviews, security and staff education.

While most homes met provincial safety standards, they didn't do as well in the other areas, Bellringer said in a report released yesterday.

But Bellringer added "it sounds worse than it is" because the province's standards are so tough.

"For example ... a single staff member without fire safety training would cause the staff education standard to be not met."

Bellringer's audit concluded the province needs to do a better job of inspecting nursing homes and enforcing its own standards.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

SECURITY The Canadian Standards Association has published a blueprint to help oil and gas companies protect their pipelines from vandalism and sabotage — a need highlighted by recent bomb attacks on EnCana Corp.'s operations in B.C. The CSA, along with the National Energy board, said yesterday it has developed standards that can be used to identify risks and tailor systems. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Mediators call meeting to avert railway strike
Mediators have called a meeting tomorrow with CN Railway and the union representing locomotive engineers to avert a strike. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Colvin docs blocked

Whistleblower's papers violate Evidence Act: Feds

The federal government is blocking whistleblowing diplomat Richard Colvin from giving documents to a special House of Commons committee investigating Afghan torture.

The revelation yesterday came one day after Prime Minister Stephen Harper pledged that the committee would get "all legally available" documents in order to carry out its investigation.

Justice Department lawyers have told Colvin — through the Foreign Affairs Department — that they do not accept the view that testimony before Parliament is exempt from national security provisions of the Canada Evidence Act.

As a result, Colvin's lawyer has written to the committee advising that Colvin won't be able to provide documents to Parliament as he was instructed to do last week.

"Mr. Colvin is not now in a position to comply with the committee's request for documents."
Lori Bokenfohr, lawyer

Stephen Harper

Given "the potentially grave repercussions to Mr. Colvin for violating provisions of the Canada Evidence Act, Mr. Colvin is not now in a position to comply with the committee's request for documents without further instruction resolution of the question of the applicability of (Section) 38 to the documents," Lori Bokenfohr wrote in a letter obtained by The Canadian Press.

Violating Section 38 of the Canada Evidence Act can be punishable by five years in prison.

Defence Minister Peter MacKay said the government intends to comply with the order to produce documents, but tempered expectations by saying the records will pass through several filters before they get to MPs.

Colvin gave politically explosive testimony last week, alleging that all prisoners Canada handed over to Afghan authorities were likely tortured in 2006 and early 2007.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

POLL Canadians aren't buying the Harper government's assertion that there's no credible evidence Afghan detainees were tortured, a new poll suggests. The Canadian Press Harris-Decima survey reveals 51 per cent of respondents said they believe Richard Colvin's testimony that all prisoners handed over by Canadians to Afghan authorities were likely abused and that government officials were well aware of the problem. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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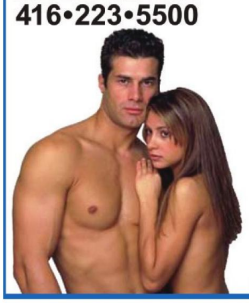

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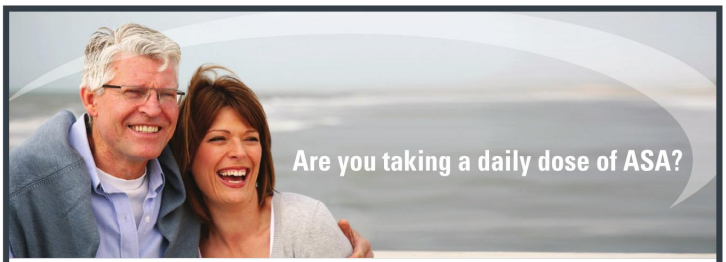

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Mistrial ruled in murder case
A judge in a murder case has declared a mistrial and dismissed the jury in Cornwall, Ont. A man was being tried after the death of his spouse's mother. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Torture allegations 'ludicrous': Hillier

A bristling Rick Hillier has blasted claims by diplomat Richard Colvin that the military handed over Afghan prisoners to face torture, calling the allegation "ludicrous."

The former chief of the defence staff told a Commons committee yesterday that reports from Afghanistan in 2006 never mentioned that prisoners were at risk of torture.

"We didn't base our work on things like reports written in May or June 2006, which said nothing about abuse, nothing about torture or anything else that would have caught my attention or indeed the attention of others," he said.

He was backed by Michel Gauthier, former head of Canada's expeditionary forces, who said reports in 2006 and early 2007 never even used the word torture — except in one isolated incidence.

The testimony from Canada's former top generals appears to flatly contradict Colvin — the former No. 2 at the Canadian embassy in Kabul — who told MPs his reports warned that prisoners handed over to Afghan prisons were almost certain to face torture.

Hillier, who commanded the Canadians Forces from February 2005 until July 2008, said he wasn't going to act on hearsay or self-serving Taliban complaints. He said he recently reread the reports to reassure himself that he didn't miss something three years ago.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Former chief of the defence staff Gen. Rick Hillier arrives yesterday to a commons special committee on Afghanistan, hearing witnesses on the transfer of Afghan detainees, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

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School's out for the Canada Winter Games
Elementary and high school students in Halifax will have two weeks off in February 2011 because of the Canada Winter Games. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFB welcomes flame

2010 torchbearers visit New Brunswick base

A five-gun salute and the cheers of hundreds of people welcomed the Olympic flame as it was carried through Canadian Forces Base Gagetown near Fredericton yesterday in a show of national pride.

"It's very exciting and a lifelong dream to be part of the Olympics — although not as an athlete. This is my own Olympic moment," said Capt. Dave Nixon of Amherst, N.S.

The 43-year-old soldier, stationed at CFB Gagetown, was among 20 soldiers and civilians serving as torchbearers on the base.

Nixon, who has served in Bosnia and Afghanistan, said he felt overwhelming pride in his daily job and that of torchbearer.

"I look down at my left shoulder and I see the Canadian flag and that's a great honour for me, to get to wear that every day and come to work," he said.

"And this is something that is a Canadian initiative with 12,000 runners from across the country and different walks of life, all carrying that Olympic flame towards the Feb. 12 lighting in Vancouver, so it's a great national pride moment."

The sprawling New Brunswick base is the largest military training grounds in the Commonwealth.

It is one of 14 military bases the torch will visit during its 106-day journey across Canada.

Hundreds of residents and schoolchildren from the neighbouring community of Oromocto, N.B., turned out for the celebration at the base and lined the streets to cheer the runners on.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

RAY BOURGEOIS/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Paula Belliveau, left, and Sara Gresh exchange the Olympic flames yesterday at Canadian Forces Base Gagetown in Oromocto, N.B. **Follow the Olympic torch's journey with an interactive map at metronews.ca/sports.**

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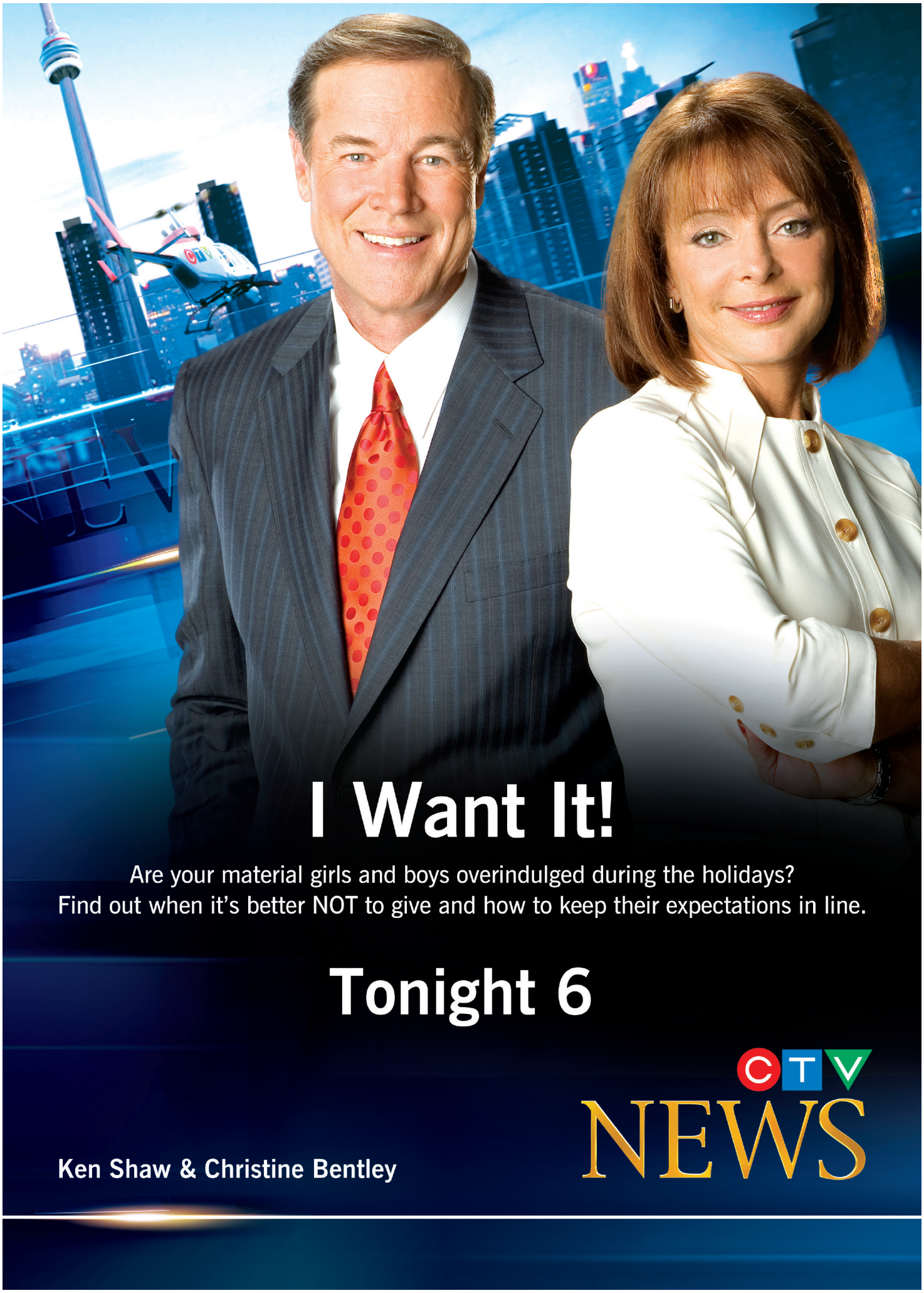
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Brockville man sentenced in Cornwall indecency offenses

A Brockville, Ont., man convicted of sex-related offences in Cornwall has been handed a sentence of two years and three months. The man pleaded guilty in May to three counts of gross indecency for incidents dating back to the 1960s. THE CANADIAN PRESS

24 cases of severe vaccine reaction confirmed

Public health chief says rate within norm as officials hope millions will still get flu shots

There have been 24 confirmed cases of a type of severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis in Canadians who have received an H1N1 flu shot, including one person who died after getting vaccinated, the head of the Public Health Agency of Canada said yesterday.

Flu Outbreak

Dr. David Butler-Jones said the person who died — identified in the media as a Quebec man in his 80s — met the criteria for having an anaphylactic reaction. But he said it's still not clear whether that or other health problems caused the death.

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can cause a person's airways to close up. It can be fatal and must be treated quickly with adrenaline, generally administered via the EpiPen devices carried by people with severe food or insect sting allergies.

Butler-Jones said the rate of anaphylactic events was about 0.32 cases for every 100,000 doses of vaccine delivered — a figure that's within the norm for mass vaccination efforts.

Butler-Jones disclosed the information in Ottawa during a news conference at which federal health officials revealed flu activity appears to be levelling off in some parts of the country.

They did not say where, though Butler-Jones did mention there has been a decline in new hospitalizations in British Columbia, which was at the forefront of the current wave.

However, Butler-Jones warned a good chunk of the Canadian population is likely still susceptible to the virus. He estimated between five and 10 per cent of people have probably been ill and about 25 per cent have been vaccinated.

Officials hope to persuade millions more to get vaccinated, especially now that vaccine production is expected to more than keep pace with demand.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A Royal Bank report says home ownership prices are likely to stay high going into 2010 and warns of inevitable rate hikes.

Home ownership costs up 1st time in 18 months

The cost of home ownership went up in Canada for the first time in 18 months, with tight supply and strong demand expected to keep prices high going forward in 2010, a new report by the Royal Bank says.

Consumers planning to buy houses should take note that the current low interest rates aren't going to hold indefinitely, senior economist Robert Hogue said yesterday.

"Families and households that are considering making the leap have to be mindful that, yes, there are very attractive interest rates right now but it's not going to remain at this level forever," he said.

Costs increased for the first time since the spring of 2008 due to a slight rise in mortgage rates and higher property values, Hogue said in a housing trends and affordability report.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Buyer beware

- Mortgage industry experts have suggested that while interest rates aren't going up any time soon, when they do rise it will be rapid enough to potentially prove devastating for homeowners who aren't prepared for increased monthly payments.

NDP aim for disharmony over harmonized sales tax

They parlayed anger on the HST to a byelection victory in British Columbia. Now, the federal NDP wants to take that tax protest across the country.

Over the next 15 weeks, NDP politicians plan to infiltrate the minds of shoppers as they ready for the holidays. They'll be reminding them that unless they take action, their bills will be higher a year from now due to the harmonized sales tax.

And after Christmas, New Democrats will be going door to door, especially in weak Tory ridings, to make their case.

"Our goal is to offer a voice to those who are tired. They work hard to make ends meet, and they're being slapped in the face," said national director Brad Lavigne. The aim is to whip up enough opposition to the tax to either keep it off the federal legislation agenda, or fight an election over it.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Rescuers working to free man stuck in cave

A search-and-rescue team is working to free a man stuck about 45 metres underground in a popular Utah cave. The 26-year-old man has been trapped since late Tuesday in the narrow cave known as Nutty Putty, The Salt Lake Tribune reported. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Weather clips adventurer's wings

A Swiss adventurer trying to soar from Morocco to Spain on jet-powered wings ditched safely into the Atlantic yesterday after hitting turbulence and clouds so thick he could not tell if he was flying up or down. The bad weather — rather than a mechanical malfunction, as reported earlier by the project's sponsors — thwarted the bid of Yves Rossy, left, to become the first person to achieve such an intercontinental crossing.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Charges on eve of anniversary

Pakistan charged seven men in last year's Mumbai attacks yesterday, its first indictment in a case being monitored by India and the United States to see if Islamabad makes good on promises to bring those responsible to justice.

Despite a crackdown in the months following the attacks, analysts say Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistani militant group blamed for the three-day assault on the financial centre that killed 166 people, remains active and largely untouched by Pakistani authorities.

The Mumbai attacks halted a slow-moving peace process between Pakistan and India — which have fought three wars since gaining independence from Britain in 1947 — aimed at resolving their core dispute over Kahsmir, which they both claim. India says Pakistan must crack down on militants before talks can resume. The charges were announced in a closed door court located inside a high-security prison near the capital Islamabad, on the eve of the first anniversary of the attacks. A judge adjourned proceedings until Dec. 5, when prosecutors will present their opening arguments.

Late yesterday, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who was in Washington, said the planners of the attacks are still free in Pakistan and issued a stern warning to punish the masterminds.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

London Warders dismissed for harassment

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

In this 2007 file photo, Moira Cameron, the first female Beefeater in the 522-year history of the famed British guard corps, poses at the Tower of London. Two Yeoman Warders there have been dismissed, it was announced yesterday, following an investigation into the harassment of Cameron. Authorities had launched an internal inquiry in response to complaints that Cameron had been subjected to a bullying campaign by some of her male colleagues.

News in brief

PAKISTAN A human rights group is urging Britain to investigate its role in the questioning of terrorism suspects in Pakistan, saying the government was aware that Pakistani officials tortured five U.K. detainees. Human Rights Watch said Pakistani intelligence agencies have corroborated its findings.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Germany, IAEA warn Iran on nukes

VIENNA The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and Germany's foreign minister urged Iran yesterday to shift from confrontation to co-operation, with the German official warning Tehran only had limited time to avoid possible new UN sanctions. Guido Westerwelle and IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei also spoke against Tehran's attempts to change a plan they brokered. The plan is meant to delay Iran's ability to make a nuclear weapon by refining its uranium elsewhere.

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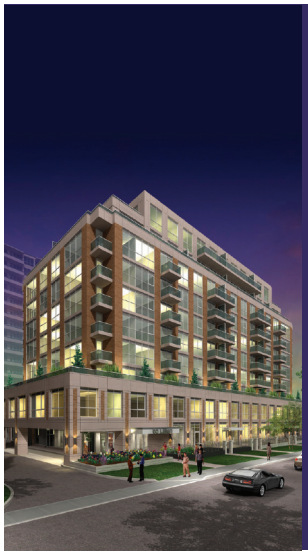

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Spanish prime minister wants EU co-operation

Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero says his government wants closer co-operation with other European Union countries to fight illegal immigration. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington **Turkey day down south**

ALEX BRANDON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President Barack Obama with daughters Sasha, third from right, and Malia, second from right, look at a turkey, Courage, yesterday with Walter Pelletier, chairman of the National Turkey Federation. Obama earlier granted the 45-pound Courage a presidential pardon from the Thanksgiving dinner table today.

Israel announces freeze

Israel will halt construction in West Bank settlements for 10 months, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced yesterday, in an effort to restart peace talks, but Palestinians rejected the freeze as insufficient because it did not include east Jerusalem.

Netanyahu said the "far-reaching and painful step" was designed to "encourage resumption of peace talks with our Palestinian neighbours." In Washington, the administration of President Barack Obama welcomed the Israeli decision.

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Space shuttle heading home
Space shuttle Atlantis undocked from the International Space Station early yesterday and headed back to Earth. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HASSAN AMMAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A family walks along a flooded street yesterday after a rainstorm in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia.

Rain is a holy pain

Weather and swine flu fears disrupt Muslim hajj

The pilgrims came — with umbrellas and rain-soaked face masks.

Fears of the H1N1 influenza virus (also known as swine flu) were high on the minds of Muslim pilgrims circling Islam's holiest site, the Kaaba, in the rain yesterday.

They added face masks to their white robes at the opening of the annual hajj in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi authorities have feared for months that the pilgrimage could become a perfect flu incubator.

Heavens open

- The heaviest rains in years snarled yesterday's rites.
- Floods closed down part of the main road to Mecca from the Red Sea city of Jiddah — the entry point into the country for pilgrims.
- Streets were flooded in Jiddah, waist high in some areas.

The event is one of the most crowded in the world, with more than three million people packed shoulder to shoulder in prayers and rites for four days.

Signs around the holy sites urge the faithful to cover their faces when they cough, wash their hands often and wear a mask.

Nigerian pilgrim Omar Issa said he chose not to get a swine flu shot.

"I am not afraid of anything because God protects me. I came here for a religious reason, I am here to worship God," he said.

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Canadian philosopher wins $850,000 award

Canadian philosopher Ian Hacking has accepted Norway's Holberg Prize, worth about $850,000 Cdn, for his research on the philosophy of science. Crown Princess Mette-Marit presented the award in Bergen yesterday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taliban chief speaks

Seldom seen Omar calls Afghan president a 'stooge'

The Taliban's reclusive leader called on Afghans yesterday to break off relations with President Hamid Karzai's "stooge" administration.

Mullah Omar's message comes less than a week before U.S. President Barack Obama is expected to announce an increase of thousands of troops for Afghanistan.

"I hope you will continue your legitimate jihad (holy war) and struggle," Omar said.

"Continue your legitimate jihad."
Mullah Omar

Omar insisted foreign troops are losing the war.

"Ground realities in our beloved country indicate that the invaders are about to escape," Omar said.

Omar led the Taliban regime that was toppled by the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, and has not been seen since.

Afghan officials claim he is in hiding in Pakistan.

U.S. military officials expect Obama to authorize an infusion of 32,000 to 35,000 troops to begin in February or March.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Turkey **Women, police in faceoff**

BURHAN OZBILICI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women protesting violence against women clash with police in Ankara, Turkey, yesterday.

How world helps brutal fighters

INDICTMENT One of Africa's most brutal rebel movements relies on a vast international network to help it buy arms and transfer money, a United Nations report says.

The U.N. findings show that supporters in North America, Europe and Africa have become the backbone of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda organization's day-to-day operations.

The findings are a scathing indictment of how little the international community has done to cut off logistical support to the organization, an ethnic Hutu militia that has wreaked havoc in Congo.

The Congolese army, the report says, has also been funnelling weapons and ammunition to the militia — a charge Congolese army officials deny.

The report says the rebel group continues to control lucrative gold mines in eastern Congo, allowing them to traffic millions of dollars in minerals.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rwanda fallout

- The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, known as the FDLR, is a rebel group made up of Hutu refugees from Rwanda.
- They took cover in Congo after the end of Rwanda's 1994 genocide of half a million Tutsis.
- Many of the FDLR's founders and several current leaders are accused of having led the genocide.

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Comment

The workplace romance ... at home

Relating

Steve Collins

metronews.ca/collins

I dropped in on an old friend who, since I'd last seen him, has not only gone into business for himself, but is working with his wife. Couples who can manage to do this sort of thing fascinate me.

So I asked him, "How is she as a co-worker?"

"She's great," he replied. What else is he going to say?

Working with someone with whom you're already entangled is the reverse of the workplace romance as we usually know it. Instead of watching a lover emerge from a stranger, you watch a stranger of sorts, a professional self, emerge from your lover.

That's exciting, sure, and many couples' complaints won't be yours anymore. You'll certainly see enough of each other, be more involved in each other's lives, but we should always be careful of what we wish for.

Is your attachment strong enough to survive a highly personal office brand of politics? What happens to your relationship — or your business — when one or the other fails? The exit interview could be remarkably unpleasant. How do you make your partnership more Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis, less Ike and Tina Turner?

Times like these, in which jobs evaporate and self-employment beckons, tempt more couples to experiment with working together. It's been tried often enough that there are countless how-to articles, written by successful power couplers, usually with lists of rules.

Alas, since these are relationships after all, everybody's rules are different, and often contradictory. "What happens at work stays at work," advises one guru. "What happens at home stays at home."

Another warns, "Don't separate work from the rest of your life ... The idea that 'work time' and 'time off' are separate is a false distinction."

Thanks for clearing that up, gurus.

I've never tried this particular setup myself (I prefer to be the one listening to the complaints about work than the subject of those complaints) but I've seen many couples do it with style. Unsurprisingly, they tend to be married. Any marriage, after all, is already a de facto small business.

Steve Collins offers his best guesses on relationships for Metro every two weeks.

Views

Gender studies support crucial lessons

FourthWave

Canice Leung

metronews.ca/fourthwave

As many women do in university, I took a few women's studies classes. I remember in one mostly female class the teacher asked who was feminist; my hand was among a few that went up. But in class discussions, my classmates' thoughts on gender roles or reproductive rights made it clear that's exactly what they are.

It's an apt example of how necessary gender studies are; that young adults can dismiss feminism as radical yet recognize the cornerstones of the movement is evidence of this.

Fortunately, two initiatives are underway to change that.

Ontario's education ministry announced earlier this month that a gender studies class would be offered beginning in September 2011 — a crucial lesson for young men and women just starting to learn how to relate to one other.

Shameless Magazine, a Canadian feminist magazine, has launched free weekend workshops on journalism for teen girls called Shameless Wire. By teaching them the fundamentals of the trade, Shameless hopes to introduce more voices to tell the story of our diverse society.

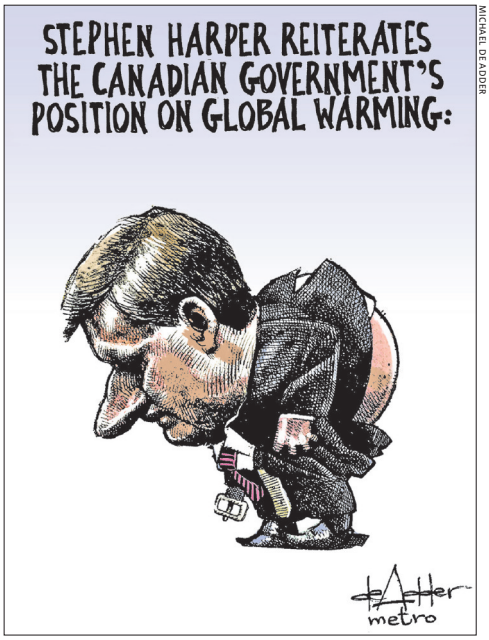
As it is, degrees and unpaid internships are practically prerogatives to become a journalist, limiting the field to those who can pay their way in. Women comprise the majority of the incoming talent pool (two in three journalism students are women, according to a 2003 U.S. study), but men hold 65 per cent of supervising positions at newspapers, a 2006 study says.

Perhaps the simplest, most important reason is this: "Very few other industries would consider this kind of model acceptable," said Allison Martell, one of two women who created Shameless Wire. "It's not because I think we need to be a token, I just think we're going to have the best workforce if we make sure it's open to everyone."

The lesson holds true outside the newsroom, too. What we absorb in our daily lives shapes our identities. As Emily Gould wrote on moreintelligentlife.com: "Women have not yet come so far that we can shrug off worries about being misrepresented."

My hope is these two programs will offer a lesson not to just young adults, but to all of us: There is nuance in the world and, by acknowledging it, we're better for it.

Canice Leung is a former editor of Ryerson University feminist magazine McClung's, copy editor at Metro, ardent feminist and loudmouth.



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Vale Inco hearing cancelled due to bad weather

The Ontario Labour Relations Board hearing to determine the legality of Vale Inco's use of office workers to do striking miners' jobs was cancelled yesterday after some members of the United Steelworkers union couldn't make it to Toronto due to bad weather in Sudbury. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

GET HELP, WHILE HELPING OTHERS...

Scientists at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, in affiliation with the University of Toronto, are conducting a study of treatments for depression. Participants will be offered 16 weeks of therapy or medication.

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Retailers fight back

Prices cut to counter U.S. Black Friday sales

In the run-up to Black Friday south of the border, Canada's retailers are ramping up sales in an attempt to keep Canadian shoppers away from bargains down in the U.S.

The efforts, planned before the biggest U.S. shopping day of the year, are also an attempt to spur recession-weary Canadians into spending their well-hoarded dollars.

And since wary retailers have restricted inventories during the recession, it may just make sense to buy early, since desired stock will be running low well before the traditional post-Christmas sales.

In Canada, retailers have used Black Friday as a reason to launch massive sales and bring forward the holiday shopping season to lure consumers into making earlier-than-planned big purchases for Christmas, analysts say.

Mark Beazley, of the Retail Council of Canada, said Canadian retailers "understand that they are dealing with customers without borders." Those customers could head south to malls such as the Walden Galleria in Buffalo which has heavily publicized its Black Friday sales — door-busting giveaways, two-for-one specials, and savings up to 50 per cent — to attract Canadian shoppers.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TORONTO STAR/STEVE RUSSELL

Retailers at places like the Eaton Centre are ramping up sales to keep Canadian shoppers away from bargains in the U.S.

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Business in brief

OPEL An Opel plant in Belgium faces an uncertain future as General Motors moves to restructure its European operations, a drive expected to cost some 9,000 jobs across the continent, Nick Reilly, the head of GM Europe, said yesterday. But Reilly made clear in meetings with German officials that Opel's four plants in the country will remain open.

REVENUE Digital audio company VIQ Solutions Inc. said yesterday its third-quarter loss widened while revenues remain unchanged compared with last year. The Toronto-area company had a loss of $448,896 in the three months ended Sept. 30 compared with a loss of $332,068 in the corresponding 2008 period.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Russia may add loonie to its currency reserves

CURRENCY The Canadian dollar shot closer to parity with the U.S. dollar yesterday after the Russian central bank said it is preparing to invest in the loonie and diversify away from the American greenback.

A Canadian market that has fared better than many during the recession, and a sluggish U.S. economy, make Canada an ideal investment for banks looking to diversify away from U.S. dollar reserves, the staple reserve currency in most countries, said Steven Butler, director of foreign exchange at Scotia Capital.

"The Canadian economy has weathered the storm much better than a lot of other countries and Canada seems like a pretty logical place to diversify, especially the way the commodities have been climbing higher and the way the Canadian dollar has weathered the storm."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Shareholders vote to split energy giant

Shareholders of EnCana Corp. voted 99 per cent in favour of plan to split Calgary-based energy giant into two companies, called Cenovus and EnCana. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Euro firms win Nortel bid

LM Ericsson and another European company have been selected to jointly purchase the GSM wireless technology business auctioned off by Nortel Networks Corp., which has accepted a joint bid worth $103 million US.

$103M

The amount of the accepted joint bid to buy Nortel Networks Corp.

The insolvent Canadian company said yesterday Sweden-based Ericsson and Austrian company Kapsch CarrierCom teamed to make the bid, which would split the GSM business units between them.

About 680 Nortel employees will receive offers of employment from the bidders, Nortel said.

Ericsson will purchase assets tied to Nortel's North American Global System for Mobile (GSM) business while Kapsch will acquire assets relating to a sales region covering Europe, the Middle-East and Africa and Nortel's Taiwan GSM businesses. Kapsch will also purchase the assets of the GSM-R business.

Ericsson, a long-time global rival of Nortel, has had a significant research and development operation in the Montreal area for many years and is poised to use Nortel people and technology to bolster its North American presence.

Nortel said it will seek the courts' approval at a joint hearing Dec. 2.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Gazprom **Profits run out of gas**

In this January file photo, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, right, and gas monopoly Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller are seen during a visit to Gazprom's main control room in Moscow. Just a year ago, Gazprom was the third largest corporation in the world. After a global recession slashed its sales and finances, the world's biggest gas producer is suddenly finding itself pressed to become more accommodating to European importers and to compete with other producers.

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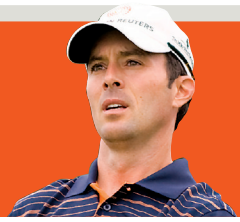
Skater banned from Olympics after alleged theft of car

Russian figure skater Andrei Lutai will miss the Winter Olympics after receiving a one-year ban for allegedly stealing a car in the United States and driving it while drunk. Russian Figure Skating Federation chief Valentin Piseyev said Lutai's suspension is for "violations of the training regime and ethical norms." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports



Weir to be enshrined

Mike Weir's career is about to come full circle. The lefty from Bright's Grove, Ont., will return to his hometown Saturday to be inducted into the Canadian Golf Hall of Fame during a reception at Huron Oaks, the golf course where he honed his game as a kid.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Sports in brief

BASEBALL The Toronto Blue Jays are bringing back shortstop John McDonald, signing him yesterday to a two-year deal worth $3 million US. The move gives the Blue Jays at least one shortstop for the big-league roster as starter Marco Scutaro is also a free agent.

AHL Viktor Stalberg scored one goal and set up another to lead the Toronto Marlies past the Lake Erie Monsters 4-1 in an American Hockey League matinee yesterday. Troy Bodie, Alex Berry and Matt Beleskey also scored for the Marlies (9-7-1-2), who won their second in a row.

MLS Columbus forward Alejandro Moreno and Chivas USA defender Shavar Thomas were among 10 players selected by the Philadelphia Union in the MLS expansion draft. No players were chosen from Toronto.

SOCCER Five clubs in Albania, Latvia, Slovenia and Hungary were named as suspects in European football's biggest match-fixing investigation, UEFA said yesterday. The European football body identified the clubs as KF Tirana, FC Dinaburg, KS Vilaznia, NK IB Ljubljana and Honved and said they allegedly fixed seven qualifying round games in the Champions League and Europa League between July 16 and Aug. 6.

TENNIS Rafael Nadal fell out of contention for a spot in the semifinals at the ATP World Tour Finals with a second straight defeat, losing 6-1, 7-6 (4) yesterday against Nikolay Davydenko.

NFL Two-time Super Bowl winner Mike Shanahan has met with the Buffalo Bills to discuss their head coaching vacancy, according to a published report. ESPN.com reported yesterday that Bills chief operating officer Russ Brandon travelled to Denver and spent seven hours meeting with Shanahan Monday and Tuesday.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Bobcats maul Raptors

Gerald Wallace broke out of his shooting slump with 31 points and grabbed 13 rebounds, helping the Charlotte Bobcats to the most lopsided victory in team history, 116-81 over the Toronto Raptors last night.

Stephen Jackson added 23 points for Charlotte, which dominated the listless Raptors. The sixth-year Bobcats' previous biggest win was a 32-point rout of Indiana Nov. 16, 2005.

Wallace took advantage of one of the NBA's worst defences by beating numerous defenders off the dribble.

Chris Bosh had 18 points and 14 rebounds, and Andrea Bargnani scored 15 for the Raptors.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHUCK BURTON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Charlotte Bobcat Stephen Jackson dishes the ball as Toronto Raptors Chris Bosh, left, and Antoine Wright close in during the first half of last night's game in Charlotte, N.C. The Bobcats won 116-81.

'It's something any father would do'

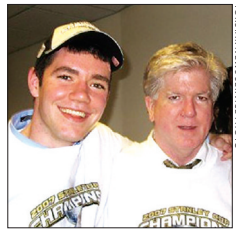
Brian Burke can be gruff and macho, belligerent and truculent. He can scowl and snarl with the best of them. In short, he can be quite intimidating.

But the hard-nosed president and general manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs has revealed a much softer, caring side to his personality — the loving and supportive father.

And he's garnered widespread praise — from his players and others inside the hockey world — for supporting his son, Brendan, who summoned up the courage to tell his father he was gay.

"Brian is being what every dad generally is: Very supportive of his son, unconditional love," said Leaf coach Ron Wilson. "If I was in the same position, I'd be doing exactly what Brian did.

"I think it shows a different side of Brian that not many people know. I've known Brian for more than 35 years, I understand the softer side he never lets out, the caring type of person that he is."



TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

Brendan Burke poses for a photo with his father, Brian.

The topic was on everybody's lips in both dressing rooms prior to last night's Leaf-Lightning game.

"It's something any father would do," said veteran forward Jamal Mayers.

Some players were asked if an openly gay teammate would be ever be accepted.

"Why not?" said Lightning forward Steve Stamkos. "It's a weird question. It's a personal thing. If you want to come out, good for you. If not, no one is ever going to find out."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Maple Leafs top Lightning

Niklas Hagman had two goals and Matt Stajan scored the go-ahead goal late in the second period to lead the Toronto Maple Leafs past the Tampa Bay Lightning 4-3 last night.

Nikolai Kulemin also scored to help the Maple Leafs improve to 5-11-7. Rookie defenceman Carl Gunnarsson had three assists in his sixth career NHL game.

Tampa Bay got goals from Andrej Meszaros, Vincent Lecavalier and Ryan Malone. The Lightning, 5-1-4 at home, entered action as the last Eastern Conference team without a home loss in regulation.

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What causes hereditary hair loss?

Each hair grows from a pocket in the skin called the hair follicle. During its growing phase, the follicle has a bulb-shaped bottom, the center of which is called the dermal papilla. The papilla is fed by very small blood vessels, which bring it food & oxygen and remove wastes. The papilla is highly sensitive to hormones and chemicals secreted by the body *(or ingested as a medicine)* which impacts hair growth.

It is believed that some individuals have a genetic predisposition to a receding hairline *(most common in men)* or hair/follicle thinning over larger areas of scalp *(more common in women)*. These conditions result from hormonal changes caused by an enzyme in the dermal papilla called 5-alpha-reductase. This enzyme breaks down the hormone testosterone into dihydrotestosterone *(DHT)*.

Over a period of time, an over abundance of DHT causes the hair follicle to degrade and shortens the active phase of the hair, eventually leading to thinner hair and eventual hair loss.

How does BIO-FEN PLUS™ *work?*

Specific compounds within the herbal extracts inhibit the 5-alpha-reductase *(and therefore reduce DHT)* to prevent or slow down the rate of hair loss. This process is the principle by which the prescription drugs such as Propecia *(finasteride)* work. However, BIO-FEN PLUS™ also contains additional compounds which remove excess cholesterol and testosterone – the building blocks of DHT.

BIO-FEN PLUS™ also contains vitamins to increase blood flow to the small capillaries that feed the hair roots, to deliver the active herbal compounds and remove waste. **Therefore, BIO-FEN PLUS™ provides a natural, safer alternative to expensive drugs, and/or expensive & painful hair transplants.** As with the prescription alternatives, results vary from person to person, and no one product will work for everyone.

How long must I use BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

BIO-FEN PLUS™ capsules are usually effective at stopping hair loss within the first two months. However, since healthy hair grows only about 1 cm each month, it may take up to three months before you notice that hair growth is increased or further hair loss is stopped.

Anyone experiencing new growth will see it within four to six months. Once results become apparent, some users are able to reduce their BIO-FEN PLUS™ supplement dose to one capsule every second or every third day. Some clients will continue to take BIO-FEN PLUS™ daily. Once you stop completely, however, your hair growth pattern will slowly go back to the point where you started.

How safe is BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

The ingredient combination in BIO-FEN PLUS™ is generally safe for most adults. However, the following cautions are advised:

Folic acid: Consult a health care practitioner if you are uncertain whether or not you are taking adequate vitamin B12, as folate supplementation can mask a Vitamin B12 deficiency.

Vitamin B3: Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you have impaired liver function.

Vitamin B6: Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you are taking levodopa.

What is the quality of BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

BIO-FEN PLUS™ is manufactured in Canada according to a quality assurance program called Good Manufacturing Practices *(GMP)*. This ensures that the ingredients are tested for their level of quality, potency & purity, prior to production and again prior to sale.

See our website to locate your nearest Health Food Store or Pharmacy that offers BIO-FEN PLUS™ and other quality products from Hair Grow Technology. If you have any questions or comments about our products that target hair loss and support the growth of strong, healthy hair, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Flax lignans, standardized to 20% secoisolariciresinol diglucoside *(SDG)*	100 mg
D-calcium pantothenate *(Vitamin B5)*	10.40 mg
Niacinamide *(Vitamin B3)*	10.25 mg
Pyridoxine HCl *(Vitamin B6)*	2.00 mg
Riboflavin *(Vitamin B2)*	1.58 mg
Folic acid	0.095 mg
Biotin	400 mcg

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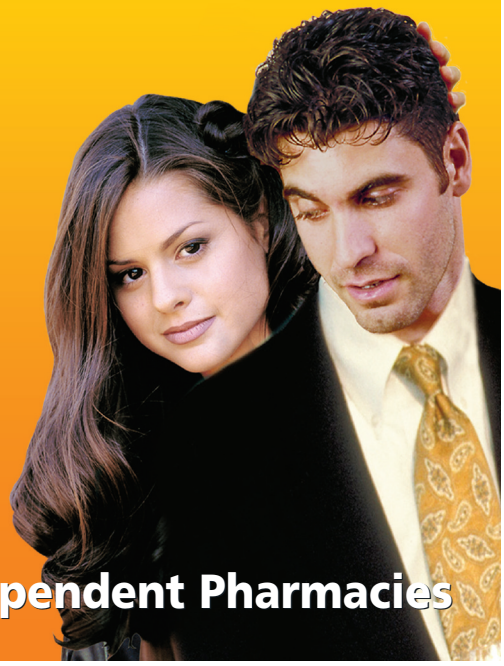

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Iverson to retire?

Allen Iverson is set to retire from the NBA, according to an online report. Commentator Stephen A. Smith published a statement on his website yesterday attributed to Iverson. It says Iverson plans to retire but also that "I feel strongly that I can still compete at the highest level." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SCOREBOARD

NHL

OVERALL STANDINGS
EASTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
d-Pittsburgh	24	16	8	0	74	68	32
d-Washington	24	13	5	6	85	73	32
d-Ottawa	21	12	6	3	66	62	27
New Jersey	21	14	6	1	58	48	29
Buffalo	20	12	6	2	54	50	26
Boston	23	11	8	4	57	58	26
Philadelphia	21	12	8	1	73	59	25
Tampa Bay	21	9	5	7	56	63	25
N.Y. Rangers	23	12	10	1	72	65	25
N.Y. Islanders	24	9	8	7	67	74	25
Atlanta	20	10	7	3	71	61	23
Florida	22	10	9	3	62	72	23
Montreal	23	11	11	1	57	66	23
TORONTO	**22**	**4**	**11**	**7**	**57**	**82**	**15**
Carolina	23	5	13	5	53	83	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
d-Colorado	24	14	7	3	74	71	31
d-San Jose	25	16	5	4	85	62	36
d-Chicago	22	15	5	2	70	49	32
Calgary	22	13	6	3	69	62	29
Dallas	23	11	6	6	70	65	28
Los Angeles	24	13	9	2	73	75	28
Nashville	22	13	8	1	53	57	27
Columbus	22	12	7	3	69	79	27
Phoenix	24	13	10	1	59	59	27
Detroit	22	11	7	4	68	64	26
Vancouver	23	12	11	0	67	60	24
Edmonton	24	10	11	3	72	75	23
St. Louis	21	8	9	4	50	54	20
Anaheim	22	8	11	3	63	75	19
Minnesota	22	8	12	2	54	68	18

d - division leaders ranked 1-2-3 regardless of points

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Ottawa at New Jersey
Buffalo at Washington
Toronto at Tampa Bay
Philadelphia at N.Y. Islanders
Montreal at Pittsburgh
Atlanta at Detroit
N.Y. Rangers at Florida
St. Louis at Dallas
Boston at Minnesota
Nashville at Colorado
Los Angeles at Edmonton
Phoenix at Calgary
Carolina at Anaheim
Chicago at San Jose

TODAY'S GAMES
Columbus at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
Los Angeles at Vancouver, 10 p.m.

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS
Toronto at Charlotte
L.A. Clippers at Indiana
Miami at Orlando
Philadelphia at Boston
Cleveland at Detroit
Denver at Minnesota
Milwaukee at New Orleans
Golden State at San Antonio
Dallas at Houston
Memphis at Phoenix
New Jersey at Portland
New York at Sacramento

TODAY'S GAMES
Orlando at Atlanta, 8 p.m.
Chicago at Utah, 10:30 p.m.

NFL

TODAY'S GAMES
Green Bay at Detroit, 12:30 p.m.
Oakland at Dallas, 4:15 p.m.
N.Y. Giants at Denver, 8:20 p.m.

SUNDAY'S GAMES
Miami at Buffalo, 1 p.m.
Carolina at N.Y. Jets, 1 p.m.
Seattle at St. Louis, 1 p.m.
Tampa Bay at Atlanta, 1 p.m.
Indianapolis at Houston, 1 p.m.
Cleveland at Cincinnati, 1 p.m.
Washington at Philadelphia, 1 p.m.
Kansas City at San Diego, 4:05 p.m.
Jacksonville at San Francisco, 4:05 p.m.
Arizona at Tennessee, 4:15 p.m.
Chicago at Minnesota, 4:15 p.m.
Pittsburgh at Baltimore, 8:20 p.m.

CFL

SUNDAY'S GAME
97TH GREY CUP
AT CALGARY
Montreal vs. Saskatchewan, 6:30 p.m.

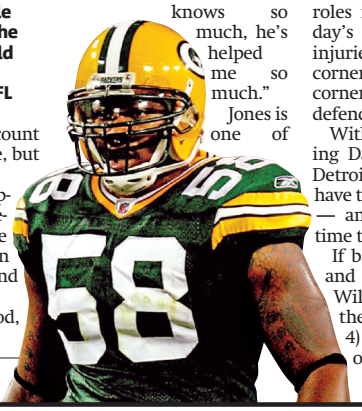
Packers look to subs

Aaron Kampman has been there for Green Bay Packers rookie Brad Jones all year, sharing the subtle tricks and techniques he has learned on the field and in the film room through seven-plus NFL seasons.

The Packers can't count on Kampman anymore, but Jones still will.

Jones credits Kampman for the improvement he has made since coming to Green Bay as a seventh-round pick out of Colorado.

"Aaron's so good, man," Jones said Tuesday. "He's really the description of a 'vet,' a veteran. He knows so much, he's helped me so much."



Brad Jones

Jones is one of several lesser-known Packers players who will have to take on more significant roles in the wake of Sunday's season-ending knee injuries to Kampman and cornerback Al Harris, two cornerstones of Green Bay's defence.

With today's Thanksgiving Day game looming in Detroit, the Packers barely have time to draw up Plan B — and certainly have no time to sulk.

If backups such as Jones and cornerback Tramon Williams don't take up the slack, the Packers (6-4) might miss the playoffs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, Milan, Marseille battle to qualify

Real Madrid, AC Milan and Marseille remain locked in a battle to advance from the same group after not a single team clinched qualification in the Champions League yesterday.

Madrid tops Group C with 10 points after Gonzalo Higuain scored in a 1-0 win over FC Zurich.

Milan drew 1-1 with Marseille to be next with eight points, one more than the French club. Marco Borriello's 10th-minute goal for the Italians was cancelled out six minutes later by Lucho Gonzalez.

If Marseille beats Madrid by a two-goal margin Dec. 8, the Spaniards will still qualify even if Milan defeats last-place Zurich.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ronaldo returns

- Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo returned to action yesterday after nearly two months out due to injury.

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If you have been newly diagnosed or have been using medication to treat Ulcerative Colitis for years, you may be eligible to participate in a research study using an investigational oral tablet.

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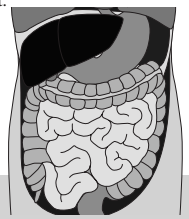

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Cancun $175 Travel Nov 30 - Dec 7/wg + taxes & fees $277

Costa Rica $299 Travel Jan 28 - Feb 4/ts. + taxes & fees $209

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Honolulu $649 Travel Dec 1 - Dec 8/ws + taxes & fees $119

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Delhi $799 Travel Jan 26 - Feb 11/lh + taxes & fees $424

Capetown $899 Travel Feb 15 - Mar 2/tk + taxes & fees $500

Vacations

Fort Lauderdale Family Special, Air + 3 Nights **$135*** *Lauderdale Beachside Hotel* + taxes & fees $238
BONUS car rental with unlimited mileage included. Departs Dec 10/swg/wg.

Las Vegas Air + 4 Nights $265 *Circus Circus* + taxes & fees $240
INCLUDES accom on the strip. Departs Dec 7/swg/wg.

Orlando New Years Eve Family Special Air + 3 Nights $330** *Holiday Inn Maingate* + taxes & fees $238
BONUS car rental included. Departs Dec 31/swg/wg.
UPGRADE to 4-star Radisson for $8 per night.

Chicago Air + 3 Nights 4-Star $479 *Sheraton Chicago* + taxes & fees $98
Departs Jan 7/ggv/aa. ADD Chicago City Pass for $79.

Boston Air + 3 Nights 4-Star $499 *Fairmont Copley Plaza* + taxes & fees $98
Departs Jan 21/ggv/aa. ADD Boston hop on, hop off tour for $38.

Myrtle Beach Air + 3 Nights 4-Star $599 *Kingston Planatation* + taxes & fees $113
Departs Jan 14/ggv/us. ADD 3-day car rental for $49 per day.

Egypt Air + 6 Nights + Activities $1359 *Oasis Cairo and Nile Palace* + taxes & fees $394
INCLUDES 3 nights in Cairo, 3 nights in Luxor, daily breakfast, Pyramid & Sphinx tour and half-day tour of the East Bank. Travel Jan 26 - Feb 1/ggv/os.

Cruise Vacations

Western Caribbean 5-Night Cruise **$289** *Century* + taxes & fees $93
CRUISE roundtrip Miami and visit Grand Cayman & Cozumel. Sails Dec 12/clb.

Eastern Caribbean 8-Night Cruise $469 *Independence of the Seas* + taxes & fees $137
CRUISE roundtrip Fort Lauderdale and visit St Maarten, St Thomas, San Juan, & Labadee. Sails Dec 12/rcl.

Exotic Southern Caribbean 11-Night Cruise $599 *Millennium* + taxes & fees $105
CRUISE roundtrip San Juan and visit St Croix, St Kitts, Dominica, St Lucia, Barbados, Grenada, Curacao, & Aruba. Sails Dec 7/clb.

Mexican Riviera 10-Night Cruise $689 *Radiance of the Seas* + taxes & fees $99
CRUISE roundtrip San Diego and visit Los Cabos, Mazatlan, Acapulco, Ixtapa and Puerto Vallarta. Sails Dec 11/rcl.

Caribbean Christmas & New Years, 12-Night Cruise $1389 *Mercury* + taxes & fees $93
CRUISE roundtrip Baltimore and visit St Thomas, St Croix, Antigua, St Kitts and St Maarten. Sails Dec 21/clb.

All-inclusives Vacations

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Departs Nov 29/swg/wg.

Punta Cana 3 Nights 4-Star $338 *Blau Natura Park* + taxes & fees $322
Departs Dec 3/sgn/5g/ts.

Puerto Plata 7 Nights 4-Star $468 *Bahia Principe San Juan* + taxes & fees $322
Departs Dec 3/sgn/5g.

La Romana 7 Nights 4-Star $497 *Catalonia Gran Dominicus* + taxes & fees $321
Departs Dec 5/nol/ts.

Puerto Vallarta 7 Nights 4-Star $497 *Royal Decameron Complex* + taxes & fees $272
Departs Dec 4/nol/5g.

Jamaica 7 Nights 4-Star $547 *Holiday Inn Sunspree* + taxes & fees $269
Departs Nov 30/nol/5g.

Los Cabos Christmas 7 Nights 5-Star $895 *Melia Cabo Real* + taxes & fees $277
Departs Dec 19/swg/wg.

Margarita Island Christmas 7 Nights 4-Star $897 *Hotel Dunes* + taxes & fees $318
Departs Dec 22/nol/c6.

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Treat yourself!
If you're out shopping and need a pick-me-up, why not go for one of these holiday lattes from Starbucks? Flavours include Peppermint Mocha, Gingerbread, and Caramel Brulée. Five cents US from the sale of every latte will be donated to RED on Dec. 1. METRO NEWS SERVICES

HOLIDAY

Shopping Guide

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

'Tis the season

From video games to gifts for your furry friends, our 17-page Holiday Shopping Guide brings you all the ideas you need.

Next week's lineup

GIFT GUIDES For a roundup of holiday CDs, gifts for him and her, and much more, pick up Metro's next Holiday Shopping Guide Dec. 3.

Tech Pg 32

Reviews of the hottest cameras.

Books Pgs 35, 43

Metro's picks for adults and kids.

29 shopping days — including today! — remain before Christmas.

Get ornamental
These "Tree Trim" ornaments range from $0.79 to $4.99 each at Zellers. For more, go to zellers.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Shoot to thrill with cameras

From DSLRs to camcorders, there's something for every photographer on your list

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

A picture truly is worth a thousand words so snap away this holiday season with some of Metro's best picks for photographic fun:

Samsung ST550 dual-screen camera
$399.99

If you love hanging out with friends but hate having all those self-portrait group shots turn out skewed or with people cut out, the ST550 camera is for you. As the world's first dual-LCD camera, the ST550 places a second 1.5-inch LCD screen on the front, lens-forward part of the camera to let you see exactly how you're framing your self-portrait. You'll also notice there are no buttons on the back of the camera, which is taken up entirely by a huge 3.5-inch touch screen that lets you take and edit your photos using just your finger. With 12.2 megapixels, image stabilization and smart face recognition to boot, this is one cool camera.

Nikon D3000 DSLR w/ 18-15mm VR lens
$639.95

A killer rig for the enthusiastic amateur photographer, Nikon's D3000 is the premiere entry-level Digital SLR camera on the market. Don't let the entry-level tag fool you though, there is nothing stripped down or feature-famished about this model. With an 11-pt autofocus, large DX format CCD sensor, three-inch LCD monitor and coming with versatile 18-55mm VR lens (VR stands for Vibration Reduction, Nikon's version of image stabilization) this is way more camera than you should be getting for the money. For real DSLR first-timers, the camera sports a powerful guide mode to help teach you not only all the ins and out of the camera, but the most crucial principles of DSLR photography as well.

Olympus Stylus Tough-6000
$329

Built to survive situations that would see other cameras either shatter into shards or shut down for good, the 10-megapixel Tough-6000 is touted by Olympus as being able to survive a five-foot drop, being submerged 10 feet underwater, sat upon or even frozen to -10 C. The body has a built-in "tap control" whereby things like flash mode or picture playback can be accessed simply by tapping the sides or back of the camera — ideal for when you're wearing gloves on the winter slopes or diving to snap shots of dolphins. If there ever was a truly child-proof camera that not even your delightful nephew could ruin with his "eccentric" ways of playing with toys, this is it.

Canon 7D DSLR camera
$2,099.99

Canon's newest DSLR addition is the real deal — a professional level camera at a semi-professional price that really understands what makes photography fun. The 7D takes Canon's excellent CMOS sensor to new heights with 18-megapixels attached to two Digic 4 image processors, which enable the rig to take photos at 8 fps in continuous shooting mode with ISO ratings up to 12,800 for superior low-light photo taking. Canon consulted with more than 5,000 professional photographers worldwide to find out exactly what they wanted from a camera and the result is a swath of revolutionary features like an intelligent light metering system, a bright viewfinder with 100 per cent coverage, full HD 1080p video shooting, a built-in transmitter for external flashes and even a dual-axis electronic level built into the viewfinder so you'll never have to take skewed shots that look like the Titanic is constantly sinking. This camera might even slay dragons if you find the right button.

Kodak Zi8 pocket video camera
$199.95

Small but feature-packed, the Kodak Zi8 is convenient and fun to use. This compact but powerful little video camera is great for taking quick vids on-the-fly for your Youtube or Facebook postings. Despite its smaller size and price, the camera packs in full 1080p HD video capabilities, image stabilization, face detection and comes with HDMI and AV cables included. Easy to carry and use, the Zi8 is perfect for budding pocket-directors.

Flip Video MinoHD camcorder
$279.99

If cuteness could transform into a camera, the MinoHD might just be the form it would take. While the spry little camera can take up to 60 minutes of high-definition video and features an internal rechargeable battery, it also has plenty of style: Yours. The MinoHD has a fully customizable exterior, from cool prints to interesting patterns to your own photos or images, making sure every Mino is unique. The personalization is fully included in the price and the camera weighs just over three ounces.

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Holiday Shopping Guide

Deck the halls

Plenty of options available when it comes to holiday ornaments

MOM-TO-BE ANGEL
This five-and-a-half-inch tall angel also features a sentiment on the back of the silver tag, which reads: Heavenly license to crave.
$16.98
Available at Hallmark stores across Canada.
hallmark.ca

1. **Spa-lendid Friends! ornament**, $22.98 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.
2. **Glass Cake Stand ornament**, $8.95 at Pier 1 Imports. For more, go to pier1.ca.
3. **Santa Belly ornament**, $4.95 at Pier 1 Imports. For more, go to pier1.ca.
4. **Shoe ornament**, $11.99, with "If the shoe fits, buy it" printed on it. Available at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.
5. **Retro plane ornament** by HomeSense, $5.99. For more, go to homesense.ca.
6. **Feathered glass bird ornaments**, $5.99 for a set of three at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.
7. **Distressed wood snowflake ornament with mirrored detail**, $5.99 at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.
8. **Glass polka-dot ornament**, $4.99 at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.
9. **Mercury glass ornaments**, $3.99 each at HomeSense. For more, go to homesense.ca.
10. **Notes of Joy glass ornament**, $24.97 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.

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Gifts for the book-lover on your list

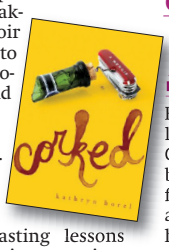
BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

A funny French wine tour memoir from a new Canadian writer and the dark sophomore novel by an Australian singer are among Metro's literary must-haves for this holiday season.

Whether you're trekking old-fashioned to the bookstore or stuffing stockings with a click, consider these top publishing picks of 2009.

Corked

Author: Kathryn Borel Jr.
Publisher: John Wiley & Sons
Price: $29.95 (hardcover)



The road to hell is paved with grapevines in this comic breakout memoir by Toronto radio producer and writer Kathryn Borel Jr. Despite growing up with regular tasting lessons from her wine connoisseur father Philippe, Kathryn's vintage vocabulary hasn't quite fermented. Aiming to connect with often-headstrong Philippe, she initiates a father-daughter wine quest through France. But the well-intentioned trip soon turns sour as she struggles to reconcile her father's outrageous behaviour with her own strenuous past. Written in Borel's sharp-witted, self-assured voice, Corked marks the introduction of an expressive, honest writer whose rich, vivacious voyage proves to be compassionate as it is, itself, corked.

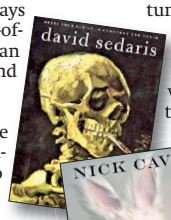
Generation A

Author: Douglas Coupland
Publisher: Random House Canada
Price: $32.95 (hardcover)

Eighteen years after the release of his breakout novel Generation X, Vancouver-based Douglas Coupland follows the narrative style and theme that brought him to recognition in Generation A. In the near future, bees have all gone extinct. But when five strangers from Canada, the United States, France, New Zealand and Sri Lanka are each stung, they become embroiled in mass media attention, studies and eventual capture by a scientist determined to discover their connection in his own way. Blending sentiments of optimism with catastrophe, Coupland continues his astute reflection on popular culture and technology, always coloured by his distinctive brand of humour.

When You Are Engulfed in Flames

Author: David Sedaris
Publisher: Little, Brown & Co.
Price: $17.99 (paperback)



In this sixth collection of personal essays by matter-of-fact American humorist and storyteller David Sedaris, the writer continues to mine the seemingly mundane, turning his daily experiences into wonderfully wry accounts of personal discovery. In more than 22 short accounts, Sedaris probes his boyfriend Hugh's quick-paced walk, sharing a boarding house with some unexpectedly less-than-refined roommates, and how it took a trip halfway around the world for him to quit smoking cigarettes. Equal parts absurd and upstanding, When You Are Engulfed In Flames propels Sedaris' frank storytelling prowess. Fans of Sedaris' contributions to NPR radio show This American Life will enjoy the author-narrated audiobook edition, now available in stores and online.

The Death of Bunny Munro

Author: Nick Cave
Publisher: HarperCollins Canada
Price: $29.99 (hardcover)

Don't let the ironically adorable fluffy bunny costume on this book's cover fool you. The Death of Bunny Munro fits nicely in the dark thematic vein established by Australian bands The Birthday Party and The Bad Seeds, both fronted by its author Nick Cave. Bunny is a door-to-door beauty salesman in England, but his sex addiction finds him aiming to get into more than the just the wallets of his prospective customers.

After his wife commits suicide, Bunny escapes the apartment they shared, hitting the open road to teach his son the selling art. The book's morbidly humorous tone turns grim when Bunny, still plagued by his habit and harrowed by loss, encounters the unforgiving skeletons in his closet.

More books for your shopping list

- For Metro's book picks for children between the ages of eight and 12, please turn to page 43.

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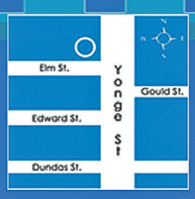

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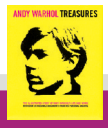

For the art lover
Andy Warhol Treasures: The Illustrated Story of Andy Warhol's Life and Works, $39.95 at Indigo and Chapters stores, or online at chapters.indigo.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Gifts for the gamer

KAREN FALCON
for Metro Canada

This season is stuffed full of gaming goodness and Metro has made it wicked-easy for you by narrowing the choices down to the best of the holiday offerings (all under $60). Just take this handy paper to the store and point to what you need. Clever, right?

Borderlands

Platform: PS3, Xbox 360
Rated: M

There's never been anything quite like it. It's a shooter and it's an RPG. I'm just gonna put this out there and say I don't think I played a better game this year. Did I mention it's got guns? A mind-boggling amount of inspiring guns? And vending machines where you can use your XP to buy health, shields, ammo, and more guns?

The single-player is fantastic but as you roam around the Borderlands searching for loot, think about convincing your friends to get this game too — it's uber-good alone but even better with four of you running and gunning, leveling up your distinct characters, and making giant Spider Ants go splat.

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2

Platform: PS3, PC, Xbox 360
Rated: M

You need to secure Burger Town and it's not going to be easy. The campaign is relentlessly frantic, short, and super-freakin'-hard on Veteran, but don't worry because the single-player story isn't where it's at. The online play that delivers all kinds of great new stuff and the new two-player co-op Special Ops missions are where it's at. With ground-wrecking graphics, kill-streaks that unlock nukes, and lasting appeal that will take you to 2014, I wonder if this is why COD MW2 is busting all kinds of video game records — I'll bet it is.

Forza Motorsport 3

Platform: Xbox 360
Rated: E

I'm no driver. I'm just a chick who games a lot and the beauty of this game is that even if you're like me and have no clue what a gas pedal looks like, you can still win races and feel like a rock star. But that's only one of the beauties. There are lots! Like the endless decals and paint jobs you can create. Like racing around the world with people from around the world. Like turning off the racing line, the ABS, and the traction control, then stuffing your beautiful creation right into the corner on that hairpin turn.

Whatever your capacity for racing games, Forza 3 rocks. And another beauty — pretty much every car is for sale from the very beginning so you don't have to wait to play. Beautiful.

Left 4 Dead 2

Platform: Xbox 360, PC
Rated: M

Mmm... zombies. Creepy, creepy zombies. Zombies vs. up to four co-op human players.

The undead stumble around faster than you think the undead would, the Director (AI) is brilliant, and the game tailors itself to the player's abilities. So what's better than that, you ask? Well, for starters, there are five immediately accessible campaigns, an insanely fun multiplayer mode called Scavenge, a grenade launcher that teaches you the meaning of "friendly fire", and a frying pan. That's right — and it makes the most satisfying sound when it connects with zombie brains. Frying pans aren't just for eggs anymore — they're for hordes of swarming zombies.

A scene from Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time.

LEGO Rock Band

Platform: Wii, Xbox 360, PS3
Rated: E

When I grow up, I want to be in a rock band. A LEGO rock band! It doesn't matter if you're not musically inclined, because with LEGO and a microphone, guitar, or drum set, you can be a star — just like me.

Jump in and buy this Rock Band for the family. We're talking super-fun for all ages. Set the kids up with a guitar and let 'em rock out as David Bowie or Pink.

They'll amass LEGO studs, earn groupies, hire a manager, buy a bus, and unlock new venues. Then you'll have to wave bye-bye because they're hittin' the road. CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Sweet treat
This Life Brand Platinum Premium Belgian Chocolate Penguin, $4.99, makes the perfect stocking stuffer. Available at Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves is one of the best-looking and most satisfying story-driven single player games of all time, our reviewer says.

New Super Mario Bros. Wii

Platform: Wii
Rated: E

Four-player multiplayer Mario! It's hard to believe, but it's real and it's here — and with four players, it's super-fantastic!

You can play this with anyone in your house — even your mom. And did I mention you can pick up the other players and throw 'em at piranha plants just because you feel like it? Watching them try to wall-jump their way back to safety while you tear around hogging all the coins is vastly entertaining. Sometimes they don't make it and somehow, that's even more entertaining.

Mini Ninjas

Platform: Wii, Nintendo DS, Xbox 360, PS3
Rated: E

Oh little ninja, how appealing and wickedly entertaining you are. And you have mini friends who are also ninja-like-and-deadly, but in a remarkably charming way.

I know what you're thinking. You think it's a kid's game. You think that's who you're buying it for. And late at night, after the kids are asleep, you'll find yourself sitting there taking control of Hiro, going out in search of the other four playable mini ninjas, mixing potions, and doing a little fishing on the side. Evil Samurai Warlord and Fart Boss should be afraid. You're sending in the ninjas.

Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time

Platform: PS3
Rated: E

Your favourite Lombax is at it again and this time he's packin' a customizable super-cool, uber-inventive arsenal.

With a mind-boggling amount of stuff to upgrade, fun puzzles, and fantastic Clank sections, this last instalment of the Future series isn't one fans or newcomers should miss.

It's a perfect Ratchet game with stupendous guns, tonnes of nuts and bolts flying all over your screen, a brilliant control scheme, and a magnificent pair of hoverboots. Oh, and a Chimp-o-Matic — because everybody needs a gun that turns enemies into monkeys!

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

Platform: PS3
Rated: T

I've decided that chuckin' propane tanks at enemies and then shooting 'em to make big fat destructive fireballs is one of the best things to do in videogame land. Kids, do not try this at home unless you're playing your PS3 and playing one of the best-looking and most satisfying, story-driven single-player games of all time.

It's Nathan Drake meets Lara Croft meets Indiana Jones meets Awesome in Uncharted 2. And wait for it: There's more awesome — there's multiplayer too! If you're going to gift it, throw in some frozen dinners and a microwave, because your recipient won't have time to cook for a while. Trust me. I know things.

How can I earn a holiday this Holiday?

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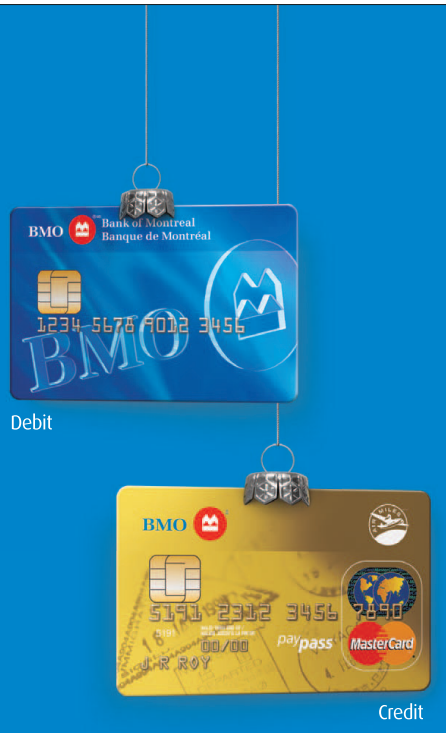

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Mad for plaid
This Buffalo Plaid Hobo bag is available at Gap for $54.50. For more, go to gapcanada.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Great gifts under $25

This gift-giving season, $25 and under is the place to be.

The economy is slowly recovering, yet consumers remain nervous, leading retailers to offer more items for $25 or less, experts say.

"A few years ago, there was no price barrier for most retailers and most consumers," said Kathy Deane, president of the New York-based retail consultancy Tobe. "Now consumers are looking for value. This is the year of $25-and-under gifts."

In the past, stores and malls focused on presents less than $50 or less than $100, said Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at market research firm NPD Group.

"This year, the $25 price point really has resonated," said Cohen. It's what most people will spend for stocking stuffers or gifts for people outside their immediate family, he said.

"That's the magic price point line, which retailers recognize is their target zone," he said. "Twenty-five dollars buys someone a gift that says, 'I thought about you.'"

This year's holidays will be cautious ones, said Cohen, with stores offering traditional, practical gifts.

"The retailer is going to say, 'We understand the economy is challenging. Instead of trying to shove a $100 cashmere scarf down your throat, why don't you give a $19.99 special lambswool scarf that feels like cashmere?'"

Popular gifts are likely to include accessories and apparel such as costume jewelry, grooming gadgets, small leather goods, cold weather staples like lined gloves, cosmetic bags, wallets and cufflinks for men. Also popular will be DVDs, books, electronics accessories and $25 gift cards, Cohen said.

"All kinds of things are going to be available to make your life a tiny bit better," he said.

Here's a look at some that cost no more than $25:

FOR HER

You can find a sweater for $25, but there are also many trendy and stylish accessories.

Try leggings, which are fashionable this fall and fit into spring's skinny-leg silhouette. You can find cotton leggings in black, brown, navy, grey and purple, as well as argyle and two-tone patterns.

ALL PHOTOS BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Limited-edition two-tone tights by Trina Turk.

"Leggings are the hottest-selling thing right now. Everyone is obsessed with leggings," says Alison Hessert, a spokeswoman for HUE.

For those who like to pull on their Wellies (non-insulated tall rubber boots) on a cold slushy day or for gardening, how about fleece boot liners? They also can be worn around the house as slouchy slippers.

Contact lens cases, pill cases or coin purses can be found in a crewel-inspired print. A satin clutch in gold and other colours is great for evenings out.

Cosmetic bags, which often get grimy and need to be replaced, make a great gift. Some manufacturers make a good-looking makeup bag that doubles as a clutch in stylish patterns and colours.

Costume jewelry, such as a big faux cocktail ring, is great for a fashionable friend. "There's no question that they would be fake, but they're lots of fun," says Linda Lee, group vice-president of Macy's By Appointment.

Shoppers will be looking for gifts that are fashionable and interesting, such as statement necklaces, bangles and leather wrist bands, Deane said.

For your favourite hostess, there's a bountiful supply of stylish and practical items for the home. Think tea towels, note cards, candles, picture frames, decorative soaps, plants and flowers, food gifts and kitchen items.

The Snake Charmer Clutch by Trina.

For a wine lover, bottle stoppers can be had for under $25. Look for a faceted diamond stopper or others in animal prints like zebra and giraffe. Coasters are great for those who entertain often.

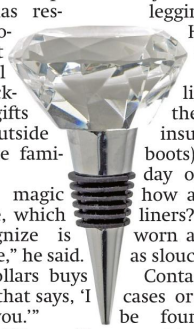
For women you know well who don't always carry a purse — for instance, when they are jogging — there's the Racktrap, a credit-card-size pocket that goes into the bra to hold essentials. From therack-trap.com, there's a single gold one, or there's the "fashion four-pack" of white lace, black lace, nude lace and a sweatproof blue sport version.

The Bra Barrette (brabarrette.com) adds some jewelled flair to the back of spaghetti tops and dresses, swimsuits or bras.

FOR HIM

For the guys, there's the ultra-traditional gift of socks and PJs, everyday items that many of our special guys don't exactly go out and buy for themselves.

Argyle socks are in or look for other traditional styles like pinstripe, pin dot, and solid black, navy and brown.



Speaking of traditional, tie accessories such as tie clips and holders as well as cufflinks are making something of a comeback.

You could also consider pocket calculators, luggage tags and umbrellas for travellers.

MISCELLANEOUS

Accessories for electronics such as computers, cellphones and gaming systems are expected to be popular this season, Cohen said.

Wii fanatics may enjoy the new Wii MotionPlus. It attaches to the Wii remote to increase accuracy and works with certain compatible games.

A neoprene pixilated computer case comes in black and light grey or several other colour combinations.

Mouse pads can be personalized. Or the popular aluminum SIGG water bottles can be tricked out with a saying, name or photo.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clockwise from top: A Facet crystal diamond bottle stopper; Lego Recycled Cufflinks; and the Racktrap.

Girlie gift
These colourful Stylize Kids Barrettes are perfect stocking stuffers for the young fashionista. Prices vary. Available at Shoppers Drug Mart, shoppersdrugmart.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Naughty & nice

Fuchsia Babydoll with matching panty, $29.50 at La Senza. For more, go to lasenza.com.

Faux Fur Neck Collar, $185, at Banana Republic. For more, go to bananarepublic.ca.

Graphic Print Compact Mirrors, $5 each, at Old Navy. For more, go to oldnavy.ca.

Man of Gingerbread mug, $9.95 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.

Tweety Body Powder by Aquolina, $32 at Sephora. For more, call 1-877-737-4672.

Mrs. Claus Apron, $34.95 at Pier 1 Imports. One size. For more, go to pier1.ca.

Malibu Cuff, $36, by Foxy Originals. For more, go to foxyoriginals.com.

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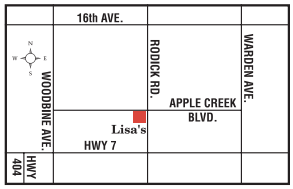

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Holiday Shopping Guide

Real trees grow sales

For some people it's the smell of cinnamon, peppermint or hot apple cider that reminds them of Christmas.

For others it's the smell of pine that fills the house when a real Christmas tree is set up next to a crackling fire.

This year Canadians may be getting nostalgic for that smell, as the country's largest organization representing wholesalers of real Christmas trees reports a 15-per-cent increase in orders from retailers this season over last.

"I think it's because people don't plan to go away because of the recession. They plan to stay at home and have a nice family Christmas," said Lewis Downey, executive director of the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association.

Downey's organization represents approximately 1,500 wholesalers across the country. Wholesalers sell both potted and cut trees.

THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

Sales of real Christmas trees are rising this year, say tree retailers and wholesalers.

"Real trees smell good — a real turkey beats canned turkey," said Downey.

According to Statistics Canada, revenues from Christmas tree sales rose in 2008 — returning to a level last seen in 2004. Others in the Christmas tree industry say the 2009 season is on track to continue the upward trend.

"People aren't going to Florida, they're staying at home — it's a nesting thing and we've seen it before in economies like this one," said Doug Drysdale, owner of Drysdale Farms near Toronto.

His farm has been in business since 1945 and operates the largest cut-and-choose farm in the province.

"As trends go we're anticipating about a 10-percent increase in business over last year," said Drysdale.

However, artificial trees remain popular, and unlike real trees they now can come pre-decorated with different sizes of LED lights, or flocked with artificial snow.

Among the trees displayed at a Sears store in downtown Toronto this year is an artificial palm tree decorated with golden LED lights.

Statistics Canada says the most popular Christmas trees are balsam fir and Fraser fir. Other species include Scots pine, white spruce, white pine and blue spruce.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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For the chef
Gourmet Today, edited by Ruth Reichl, features more than 1,000 recipes including some for meals that are ready in 30 minutes or less. Available for $49.95 at Indigo and Chapters stores, or $32.96 online at chapters.indigo.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Books kids will love

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

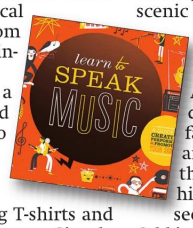
From an epic journey in the Norwegian bush to a junior jaunt through the music industry, Metro's holiday book picks for kids focus on accomplishment, whether it's mastering a new skill or overcoming the odds.

Give your eight- to 12-year-old one of these good reads, marking 2009 highlights in youth publishing.

Learn to Speak Music

Author: John Crossingham
Publisher: Owlkids Books
Price: $19.95 (paperback)

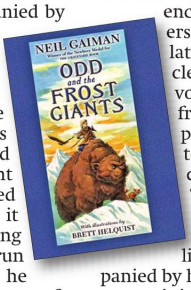
The language of music is universal and in this fully-illustrated and informative guide, Toronto-based musician John Crossingham (who plays with Broken Social Scene) is your MSL guide to reaching rock star status. Aimed at fostering kids' inspiration and innate musical ability, the motivating manual covers all the technical bases from choosing an instrument, forming a band and recording, to hands-on marketing techniques like designing T-shirts and concert posters. Simple and entertaining language paired with tips from Canadian pros like Metric's Emily Haines, Ron Sexsmith and Feist, and accompanying playlists will prime performers of any age and experience.



Odd and the Frost Giants

Author: Neil Gaiman
Publisher: Harper
Price: $19.99 (hardcover)

For the followup to his Newbery Medal-winning novel, The Graveyard Book, English author Neil Gaiman enters the winter-touched ancient forests of Norway, accompanied by scenic illustrations by Brett Helquest. After the death of his father and an accident that crippled his own leg, it seems young Odd is stuck in a run of bad luck. But he becomes a good omen for Asgard, city of the gods, when he discovers he may have what it takes to liberate it from the occupying Frost Giants. With the help of a bear, fox and eagle he meets along the way, Odd uses quick thinking and a brave face to topple the Frost Giants and return Asgard to its rightful inhabitants.



Grown-Ups Are Dumb (No Offense)

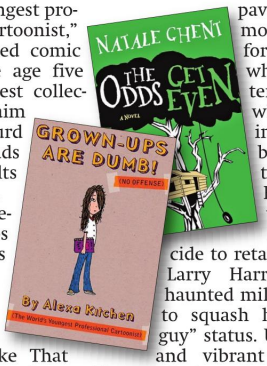
Author: Alexa Kitchen
Publisher: Disney Hyperion
Price: $11.50 (paperback)

She's bold, she draws, she writes ... and she's only 12 years old. Massachusetts-based Alexa Kitchen, "the world's youngest professional cartoonist," has published comic books since age five and her latest collection takes aim at absurd moms, dads and adults everywhere. Mixing one-off strips with series character cartoons featuring female protagonists like That Molly Kid, Hurricane Abby and Kathy Ford, Kitchen's comics reflect her own kid-common daily experiences. Young readers will easily relate to Kitchen's clever stories involving school frustrations (complete with bossy teachers), the difficulty of "simple" instructions and annoying siblings, all accompanied by her exaggerated, entertaining illustrative style.

The Odds Get Even

Author: Natale Ghent
Publisher: HarperTrophy Canada
Price: $14.99 (paperback)

Paranormal scares meet a trio's endeavour for vengeance in the latest tale from multiple award-winning Woodstock, Ont.-reared, Toronto-based author Natale Ghent. The namesake of the three Odd Fellows precedes them. Outsiders in school, Boney, Itchy and Squeak have long been fodder for humiliation, usually at the hands of class thug Larry Harry. But their shared seclusion has paved a common ground for friendship, which they often enjoy while plotting in Boney's backyard tree house. Finally fed up, the Odd Fellows decide to retaliate against Larry Harry using a haunted mill as the tool to squash his "tough guy" status. Using action and vibrant visual description, Ghent fashions a fun comeuppance narrative.



THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE PHOTO

There are tips from Canadian pros like Feist in Learn to Speak Music by John Crossingham.

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Holiday Shopping Guide

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See online movie showtimes, trailers, reviews and purchase tickets at metronews.ca/movies

Furry family fun

Your dog and cat may not know it's the holidays, but admit it, most of those pet presents are really gifts for ourselves.

Brighten the dark winter days by watching your furry family have fun, and solve some common pet problems with the following suggestions:

This Sasquatch pet bed is $99.95 at sasquatchpetbeds.com.

PET BEDS

You can get plenty of tasteful, upscale pet beds nowadays, styled to fit into your home's decor. Or you can say the heck with it and cheer up a room with a bright pink Sasquatch pet bed, "the original big foot for your little beast." If you're a fan of a certain famous colourful clog, you'll go for this one, and your pet will enjoy the cosy cave made by the shoe shape. ($99.95 at sasquatchpetbeds.com.)

If you prefer the recycled approach, the Molly Mutt pet duvet can be used to cover an old bed, or stuff it with old blankets, clothes, pillow, towels, even old stuffed toys to make a bed and keep more stuff out of landfills. (Different sizes, shapes and fabric patterns $20-$45, mollymutt.com.)

CHEW TOYS

If your dog is a tough chewer, check out Goughnuts. In stick and round doughnut shapes, these aren't cheap (around $20 at goughnuts.com), but it's worth it, because they come with a lifetime guarantee. If your dog manages to chew down to the red inner safety indicator, you can return the toy to the manufacturer for a replacement.

FOR FUN

Get tired of throwing that fetch toy over and over? Use one that will make you laugh: The Humunga Stache from Moody Pet, which makes your dog look as if he has a huge handlebar moustache. ($12 at moodypet.com/humungastache.html.)

Or why not give your furry friend Max and Ruffy's organic dog treats? They come in three cool varieties: The Molasses Explosion 1919, a delicious-smelling pumpkin flavour, and "Wolf Peach and Herb," which tastes like pizza. They're designed for dogs, but Jessica Simon of pet boutique Living Ruff in Silver Spring, Md., says that one of her human staff was eating so many of the samples that she had to buy her own box. ($8.50-$9.50 at maxandruffys.com.)

CAT TREATS

Love the cat, hate the hairballs? You can use those products in a tube, but they're messy and some cats don't like them. Try the Hairball soft treats by Pet Naturals of Vermont. Your cat will never know that the tasty chicken liver-flavoured morsels are designed to prevent a nasty problem. (Around $7, available at major retailers; petnaturals.com.)

LASER LIGHTS

Got a cat that's obsessed with those little laser lights? Try the Bada Beam automatic rotating laser toy. Living Ruff customer Eric Robbins is such a fan that he's made three of his friends buy it. "The Bada Beam is not for pets. It's for owners to be entertained by pets," says Robbins. Some cats chase it, but his Otis sits and stares "and sticks his paw out every once in a while in a vain attempt at catching the little red dot," he says. "Then when you turn it off, he meows incessantly, and not your typical meow. More like a cat in heat during a full moon." (Around $14.95 at major retailers including jbpet.com/Bada-Beam,1230.html.)

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Molly Mutt pet duvet, $20-$45, top, and the Humunga Stache, $12.

ATRIUM ON BAY
Restaurants, shops and services...
atriumonbay.com
On the north side of Dundas between Yonge & Bay
Atrium on Bay

Scent-sational
These Slatkin winter sparkle figural candles come in two sizes ($19.50 for 5.5 oz., and $39.50 for 9 oz.) at all Bath & Body Works stores across Canada. For more, go to bathandbodyworks.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Holiday Shopping Guide

Dog-gone it

Dog Photo Frame, $6.99 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.

Quilted Dog Jacket, $7.50-$16.50, at Old Navy. For more, go to oldnavy.ca.

Pet Bowl Travel Set, $16.99, at HomeSense. Call 1-866-4663-707 or visit homesense.ca. Styles may vary by store.

Portable Doggy Bag Dispenser, $7.99, at Winners. For store hours and locations, call 1-877-9466-877 or visit winners.ca.

Gourmet Dog Treats, $6.99, at HomeSense. Call 1-866-4663-707 or visit homesense.ca. Styles may vary by store.

Mini dog snow globe, $7.99 at Hallmark. For more, go to hallmark.ca.

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Bramalea City Centre – Upper level by Sears

store closing sale also available at
Lawrence Square – Allen Express way & Lawrence
KAZ MENSWEAR – North York Sheridan Mall Jane & Wilson

For the fashion-lover

Valentino: A Grand Italian Epic by Suzy Menkes pays homage to Valentino's illustrious career with images from his archives. Available for $40 at Indigo and Chapters stores or at chapters.indigo.ca. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Holiday Shopping Guide

Tips on holiday tipping

This holiday season, a leaner budget might clarify which people truly make a difference in your life. The challenge will be figuring out how much to tip them.

Determining what to give during the holidays, if anything, will likely be more complicated than in years past. Even if money is tight, it's hard not to feel guilty about skimping on the usual year-end bonus. You might also worry that not tipping will create an awkward tension, or result in shoddier service.

Still, you won't be alone if you scale back. About one-quarter of respondents to a recent Consumer Reports survey plan to tip less this holiday season than they did last year. Only six per cent plan to give more. If you're among those on a tighter budget, here's how you can save without appearing cheap.

KNOW THE CUSTOMS

Before you start doling out money, you might be curious about what others are giving. There are no hard-and-fast rules, but year-end tips are generally the cost of a single session. So if a haircut costs $40, that's how much you could give as a tip.

And holiday bonuses are generally reserved for people you've relied on for at least six months, said Mary Mitchell, author of The Complete Idiot's Guide to Business Etiquette. So don't feel obligated to tip a hairdresser you've only been to a few times.

For someone like a paper boy who doesn't charge per delivery, ask others what they're giving if you're at a total loss.

FOCUS ON KEY PEOPLE

One way to save is to focus on those you feel must be tipped.

Last holiday season, for instance, the downturn didn't affect how much housekeepers and teachers got. But fewer people tipped their barbers, garbage collectors, mail carriers and manicurists, according to Consumer Reports.

"The dollar amounts aren't changing so much as who is getting tipped," said Donato Vaccaro, who helps conduct the magazine's annual holiday tipping survey.

Since the economy hasn't improved, Vaccaro said more people will likely trim their lists this year.

If the strategy sits well with you, start by identifying those you feel absolutely should get tips. They'll likely be people you have frequent or intimate contact with, such as child- or pet-care providers.

GIVE NON-CASH GIFTS

If cash tips aren't in the budgetary stars, you can still give small gifts that don't cost a lot.

Baked goods, jams and candles are the perennial crowd pleasers. But use your knowledge about the person to be creative. For instance, someone who recently took up knitting might appreciate a subscription to a knitting magazine. Or if you know someone who wants to start a side business, you could offer to teach them how to set up a web page.

Another option is pooling resources to buy a nice gift. For example, tenants in an apartment building could team up to buy an iPod for the super. It shouldn't be hard to find people willing to participate, with so many looking to save right now.

If you feel you can't afford a tip or gift, thank-you notes can still make a difference. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Gifts need not be pricey

Finding the perfect gift for everyone on your list is not as complicated and costly as you may think. Here are tips and tricks from Canadian designer Tommy Smythe for picking out the perfect gifts:

1 **Create a work of art.** Smythe suggests framing unusual and unexpected things. Look for printed items — from a beautiful scarf to a set of playing cards — to showcase in a frame. Does the person love to travel? Buy vintage postcards or flags from places they've visited and insert them into a vintage picture frame.

2 **Contribute to a collection.** Whether you're shopping for a movie buff or the bookworm on your list, look for something they can add to a collection. They'll appreciate something that's hard-to-find, such as a vintage or rare edition from a favourite author.

3 **Identify a need.** It's not always easy to coax a wish list out of everyone, so Smythe recommends asking questions to identify what the recipient really needs. Once you've done the research, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to find the perfect gift.

4 **Look for something that's one-of-a-kind.** This sends the message that the recipient is one-of-a-kind, too. Sites like Ebay.ca offer products from thousands of merchants and many of them offer handmade items from art and jewelry to kids' toys. **NEWS CANADA**

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Shop online to avoid stress of long lines, crowds

When it comes to holiday shopping, research has shown the majority of Canadians dislike the crowds and long lines associated with this extremely busy shopping period.

Whether it's scouring the parking lot for an available spot or standing in line at the cash, the long lines make for an unpleasant experience.

Consumers looking for an alternative should consider shopping online. Many retailers have robust e-commerce sites that are open 24-7, making it convenient and easy to browse and buy.

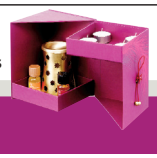
Whether you're an experienced online shopper or an Internet newbie, here are a couple tips from Nicky Mezo, head of marketing for PayPay Canada, to help you get started on your holiday shopping:

• **Look for alternate shipping options for U.S. merchants.** If you can't find the item you're looking for locally, consider purchasing it from a U.S. retailer and using a packaging forwarding service like MyUS.com. The service allows the merchant to ship to a U.S. address and arranges for the packages to be shipped to you.

• **Take advantage of comparison shopping.** There's no need to run from store to store, so it's easy to compare selection and pricing between different retailers. There are great online resources that can point you in the right direction.

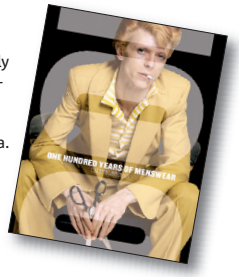
• **Use a secure payment method.** Most consumers are concerned about entering their banking or credit card information on multiple websites. Look for online retailers that offer a secure payment method that ensures you're only entering your account information once on a highly secure site. **NEWS CANADA**

Hostess gift
The Festive Stars Oil Burner, $20, creates an ambient glow. Fragrance oils include Mulled Berries, Mandarin Giner and Vanilla Spice. Available at the Body Shop, bodyshop.ca. METRO NEWS SERVICES



His favourite things...

One Hundred Years of Menswear by Cally Blackman, $50, at Indigo and Chapters stores. For more, go to chapters.indigo.ca.



Plaid fedora, $16.99, at Winners. For more, go to winners.ca or call 1-877-946-6877.

Robert Talbot ties, $150 each, at Harry Rosen. For more, go to harryrosen.com.

Alan Paine cashmere sweater, $498, at Harry Rosen. For more, go to harryrosen.com.

THE MERCURY
Add a little punk rock and luxury to his daily style with The Mercury watch by Marc Ecko. **$325**
For a list of Canadian retailers, visit marceckotime.ca or call 1-800-263-0981.

Signature cufflinks, $105, at Swarovski. For more, go to swarovski.com.

Distinction Boxed Shirt and Tie Set, $79.99, at Sears. For more, go to sears.ca.

Cashmere-Blend Argyle Sweater, $39.99, at Winners. For more, go to winners.ca or call 1-877-946-6877.

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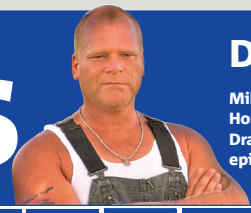

Dragon's Den

Mike Holmes, of Holmes on Homes, will join the CBC's Dragon's Den on an upcoming episode of the show.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

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Stylish stars abound in Yorkville

Yorkville
Spaces & Places

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Glitz and glamour rub shoulders with fame in Yorkville and that's just the way Yorkville likes it.

Home to some of our city's most exclusive shopping and living, Yorkville is quite possibly the schmoozing capital of the country.

It's also one of those unique places in the world where you can catch a Rolls-Royce parked outside a coffee shop or pass by a conspicuously underdressed Hollywood A-lister casually walking their dog.

Yorkville's rise into the stratosphere of high-end living is a shocking transformation from its roots as a progressive hippie den for bohemian culture in the 1960s. Talented Canadian icons like Neil Young, Joni Mitchell and Margaret Atwood fuelled their creativity among Yorkville's Victorian architecture and probably shared a few beers in the underground havens that today contain haute couture.

With its rough boundary running from Davenport Road to Bloor Street and from Yonge Street to Avenue Road, Yorkville is officially considered by the City of Toronto to be a part of the larger Annex neighbourhood.

Bloor Street in the area's south contains the most expensive fashion shops in Toronto including many flagship stores for brands like Harry Rosen, Louis Vuitton and Holt Renfrew while car lovers can ogle dream machines at the Ferrari-Maserati store on Avenue Road.

Don't expect to move in for anything less $1 million. Whether you enjoy celebrity sighting at the famous Sassafraz Restaurant or counting off the supercars parked street-side during dinnertime, you can't help but be impressed by Yorkville.

Bloor Street outside of Holt Renfrew

Kumari's

PHOTOGRAPHY: HANNAH ZITNER (KUMARI) HANNAH ZITNER (BLOOR STREET)/FOR METRO CANADA

Sassafraz restaurant

HANNAH ZITNER/FOR METRO CANADA

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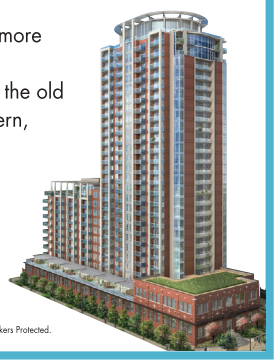

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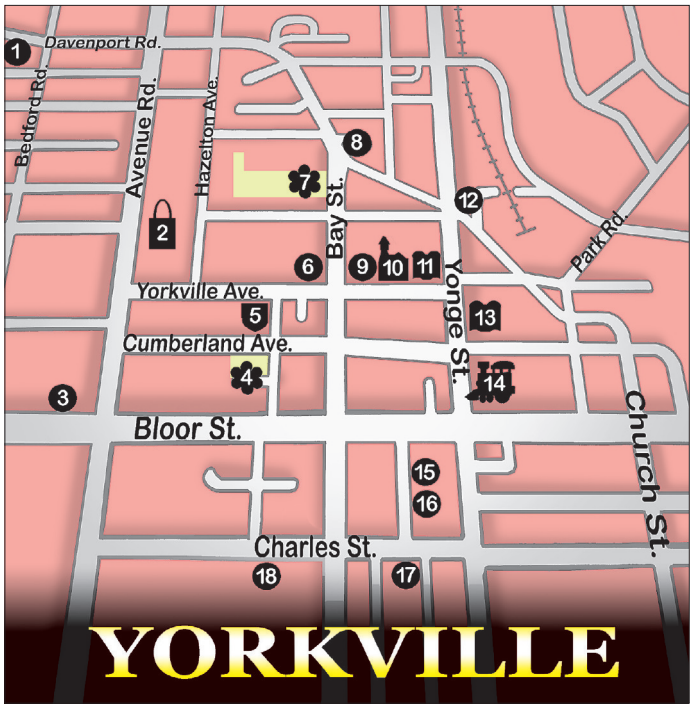
Reserve restaurants early
As much as it is known for its shopping, Yorkville has some of the best restaurants in the city. But book early as reservation lists can runs months deep at some of the more exclusive spots. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Yorkville exudes class

The Lowdown:

- **AVERAGE REAL ESTATE VALUE:** (includes the Annex): $641,292
- **AVERAGE GROSS RENT:** $1,134
- **SHOPPING AND GROCERY:** Pusateri's Fine Foods (57 Yorkville Ave.), Whole Foods Market (87 Avenue Rd.), Viva Fresh (27 Yorkville Ave.)
- **GETTING AROUND:** Subway stations at Bloor-Yonge and Bay, access to the Don Valley Parkway to the east along Bloor with TTC buses along Bloor, Avenue and Yonge.
- **CONDOMINIUMS:** 77 Charles West, Crystal Blue, The Florian, Casa Residenza Condominio, Four Seasons Private Residences, Madison Avenue Lofts, Milan Condominiums, Museum House, The Regency Yorkville, The Uptown Residences

RAFAEL BRUSILOW/
FOR METRO TORONTO



Man checking his messages

Historic Fire Station

Legend

- 1. Madison Avenues Lofts
- 2. Hazelton Lanes shopping centre
- 3. Museum House
- 4. Yorkville Park
- 5. Sassafraz Restaurant
- 6. The regency Yorkville (68 Yorkville Ave. by Hi Rise and Plazacorp)
- 7. Jesse Ketchum Park (b/w Bay and Hazelton, just north of Scollard)
- 8. The Florian (Davenport+Bay by Diamante Dev. Corp.)
- 9. Four Seasons Private Residences (Bay+Yorkville
- 10. Historic fire station 312 (34 Yorkville Ave)
- 11. T.O. Public Library, Yorkville Branch (22 Yorkville)
- 12. Milan Condominiums (Yonge+Davenport by Conservatory Group)
- 13. Toronto Reference Library
- 14. Bloor-Yonge subway station
- 15. June Rowlands Park (corner of Davisville-Mount Pleasant)
- 16. Crystal Blu (Balmuto+Bloor by Bazis International)
- 17. Bay Street Neighbourhood Casa Residenza Condominiom
- 18. 77 Charles West

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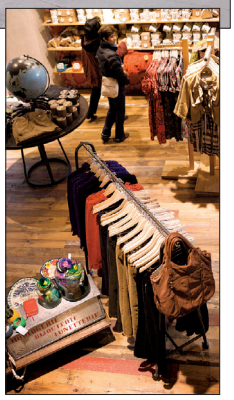
Places come at a price
Yorkville is the 25th most expensive area in the world, with an average price of $198 per square foot. METRO NEWS SERVICES

High end to high fashion

HANNAH ZITNER
for Metro Canada

Home to high-end boutiques, upscale restaurants and five-star hotels, Yorkville has shed all remnants of its bohemian past and replaced bell-bottom wearing Joni Mitchell Fans with business execs driving Aston Martins.



Above, cars park on Cumberland Street, which is populated with high-end shops. Right, shoppers looks through the Anthropologie shop in Yorkville. Top right, Cartier sparkles at night.

Boutiques selling luxury goods attract those looking for a brand rather than a bargain, while restaurants serving equal parts good food and good people-watching attract a more diverse crowd.

Large, international designer shops have laid claim to Bloor Street, with Hermes, Holts, Rolex, Coach and others fighting for a spot on shopper's gold cards, while smaller, independent boutiques have carved out their space within the lanes and alleyways of Yorkville. Shoppers can find a range of clothes, household items, baby's needs as well as gourmet groceries, fine china and expensive jewelry.

Although several high-end restaurants pepper the neighborhood (One, Sassafraz), options for those who have blown their year's shopping budget on the latest Louis V bag abound as well. Laid-back favorites for drink and food include Hemingway's, The Pilot, Flo's Dinner and the always popular Crepes a Go Go.

With less than a month until Christmas, holiday windows are another reason to take a walk through the swanky neighborhood. Classic white lights wound around wreaths and trees decorate the already picturesque neighborhood, while elaborate displays add colour to the larger department stores along Bloor (be sure to check out Holt's penguin themed display).

What do you like about Yorkville?
-By Rafael Brusilow

Adam Davis
age 31, lives in the area
A: There's a lot of good shopping and restaurants. Hemingway's has a very casual atmosphere.

Colin Baird
age 24, lives in the area
A: I find everything a lot more independent and creative here. My favourite spot to eat is Crepes a Go Go.

Adrienne Serrao
age 40, works in the area
A: There's a good energy here. The Coffee Mill is a classic Yorkville institution.

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If you buy now at the Courtyards of Upper Forrest Hill, management is offering one year of free maintenance. METRO NEWS SERVICES

The Courtyards brings calm

Suite Talk

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Urban chic abounds without pretention at The Courtyards of Upper Forest Hill, located steps away from Forest Hill Village.

A look at The Courtyards of Upper Forrest Hill.

The model suite, decorated by designer Enza Checchia of Decorenza, shows off the fact that contemporary elegance and cozy living can exist in harmony together.

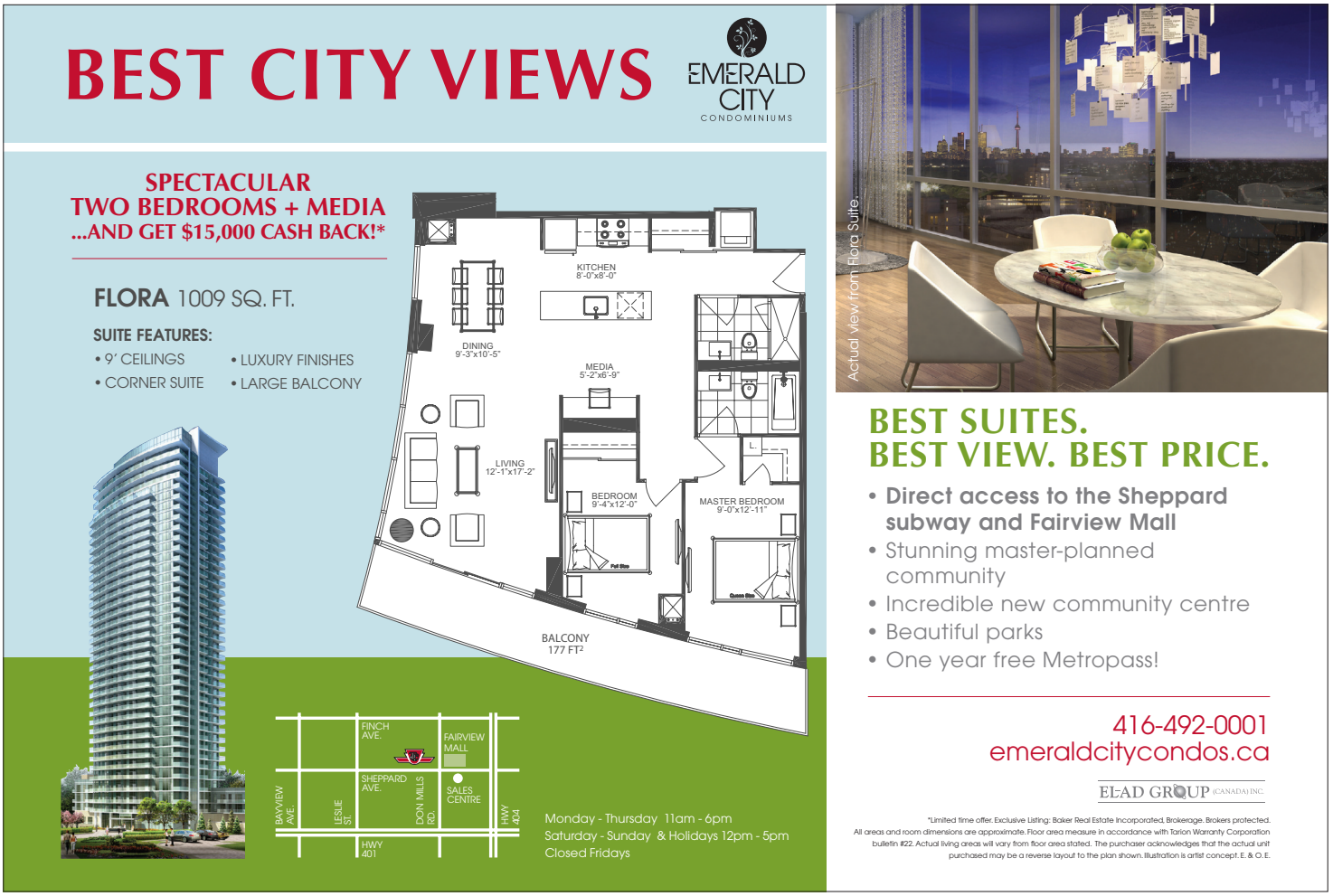
Its a very calm, inviting space. Its urban chic for a younger person buying their first space but wanting a little bit of chic in there. Its not pretentious at all but without sacrificing that urban elegance, Checchia said.

The living area features a very slick, minimalist look with plenty of layered creams and whites, silver highlights and clean lines that exude an art-deco feel. Cream leather couches and an impressive, arching floor lamp provides a unique take on modern style. Laminate flooring gives the entire model suite design a contemporary tone as well. Its all a part of creating a space that impresses while still feeling like a retreat from the everyday.

We wanted to give the suite that sharp look of organization without feeling cluttered. Theres definitely an awe factor, the sense that your day is over and you can just come home and be enveloped in a sense of freshness, to have a sense of being welcomed home, Checcia said.

The kitchen features stainless steel furniture and wood cabinetry accented with silver handles for a striking yet still cozy look. Speckled grey granite countertops throughout are flanked by an almost invisible white-tiled backsplash, letting light reverberate throughout the kitchen area to create a bright, energetic mood.

The master bedroom takes bright and airy to a new level with layered white tones throughout including white furniture. With light maximized in the space, Checchia says the effect of hard corners is lessened creating a spa-like feel. There's a kind of floating feeling because there are no hard edges, just a soft feeling, almost like a spa, Checchia said.



Style At Home Magazine
Read more in the September issue of Style at Home magazine.
ON SALE NOW! *styleathome.com*

Thrilling **theatre, cozy comfort**

EMMA YARDLEY
for Metro Canada

A movie theatre may have a booming sound system and a screen the size of a house but sometimes the ease of watching a film in the comfort of your own living room wins out.

"The key to achieving a true theatre experience at home is choosing the right entertainment system for the size of your space, your level of technology know-how, and the everyday needs of your family," says Barry Murray, director or marketing at Panasonic Canada.

He suggests looking for a system with surround-sound, true-to-life colour and HD capabilities.

"Also, think about whether the system will be used for gaming or music - there are many products available today that offer a variety of functions, like networking capabilities and iPod compatibility."

With the right tools not only can you recreate the movie theatre experience but make it even better; at home you can press pause and go to the kitchen to refill the chip bowl.

This ceramic popcorn bowl is reminiscent of those sold in theatres during the golden age of cinema. Williams-Sonoma, $59.95, williams-sonoma.ca.

Pop to it! It's easy to use, easy to clean and even easier to go back for a second bowl. Toastess Cinema Popper, $59.99, Sears, sears.ca.

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Decor

Cozy *corners*

Create a cozy corner with a subtly stunning take on seasonal decorating.
By Ann Marie Favot.

High:
Table: Cascading glass console table $495, Visitor Parking. **Lamp:** Whittier lacquered-resin lamp with handmade paper shade US $395, Jonathan Adler. **Drapery fabric:** Villa Medici linen in Sage $102 (fabric for one 54" x 96" panel), Designer Fabrics. **Chair:** Sutter enamelled- wood chair $1,998, Art Shoppe. **Cushion fabric:** Prince Stripe linen in Spa $34 (fabric for one cushion), Designer Fabrics. **Throw:** Basket-weave polyacrylic throw in Blue Smoke $115, Pottery Barn. **Basket:** Havana arurog reed large basket $79, Pottery Barn. **Plates:** Wedgwood Queen's Plain earthenware plates $24 (dinner), $14 (side), William Ashley. **Tray:** Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Chin Chin lacquered-wood nesting tray in Dove $135 per set of two sizes, Elte. **Bowl:** Celadon porcelain bowl $17, Crate and Barrel.
Total: $3,457

Low:
Table: Umo acrylic console table $390, Higher Ground Homes and Gardens. **Lamp:** Ceramic lamp $118, Union Lighting and Furnishings. **Drapery fabric:** PragueSN93/Spa linen $78 (fabric for one 54" x 96" panel), Designer Fabrics. **Chair:** Chinese Chippendale wooden chair $1,195 per pair, ChairTableLamp. **Cushion fabric:** AberdeebSD94/Spa cotton $14 (fabric for one cushion), Designer Fabrics. **Throw:** Polyacrylic throw $30, HomeSense. **Basket:** wicker basket $25, HomeSense. **Plates:** Arv stoneware plates $6 (dinner), $3 (side), IKEA. **Tray:** Steven & Chris lacquered-resin nesting tray $27, Canfloyd Trading. **Bowl:** Sophie Conran for Portmeirion porcelain bowl $10, Home Outfitters.
Total: $1,899

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW GRIFFITHS, PAINT: RHODODENDRON GRAY (WALLS), RALPH LAUREN PAINT, WASTE NOT PAPER RUFFLE WRAPPING PAPER, TEATRO VERDE, WOOSTER & PRINCE PATTERNED WRAPPING PAPER, BEDLITTER

Style At Home Magazine
Read more in the September issue of Style at Home magazine.
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The Popcorn Lovers Gift Set is the perfect present for any movie-mad friend. Williams-Sonoma, $38, williams-sonoma.ca.

Snuggle down for an evening with your significant other, a selection of snacks and your favourite Hollywood stars. Nest Chair, starting at $1127, Urban Barn, urbanbarn.com.

Remove the middle shelf from this bonded-leather DVD storage unit and use the space to hang a small flat screen TV. Pier 1 Imports, $749.95, pier1.com.

Keep everyone happy with the DVD selection - one for the kids, one for the girls and one for the guys. Julie and Julia, $34.90, HMV and Best Buy; Star Trek, $23.99; UP!, $23.99; both at Zellers.

area. A 30-sec. min. applies to calls while roaming. As of December 1, 2009 a new municipal tax will apply in Quebec to help fund 911 emergency centres set at 40 cents/mo. by the Quebec government Solo Mobile remits the required amount to Revenue Québec. A $3.00 charge applies for calls bility Inc.

Green from the roof on down

HomeScape

We are currently in the process of getting a green roof on our backyard shed, and the question I've been asked most often is why?

Indeed, why would we do this? My father shudders at the notion of putting soil and plants up on a roof. It could leak and compromise the roof, he warns darkly. Some of my older neighbours shake their heads doubtfully at the idea.

Even some of my friends look blank and want to know what it is and how it could possibly work when I mention our green roof.

But interest and knowledge is growing. In many neighbourhoods, green-roofed areas have started to appear, mostly on sheds or on flat overhangs over porches or backyard decks.

We've been dealing with a company called Xeroflor (xeroflor.ca), which installs green roofs using specialized materials, and has offices in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

This company has been doing it here since about 2001. So far, it's been mostly on commercial buildings and condos, with only a sprinkling on private residences. But with increasing interest in the residential sector, and an upcoming new Toronto bylaw mandating green roofs (January 2010) on many commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, interest and knowledge will continue growing.

A green roof is what it sounds like — a roof that is green with plants rather than black with roofing tar. The best scenario is a roof that is engineered with a green roof in mind. Existing roofs can also be used as a green roof, with some conditions related to reduced weight load.

Seen here are detailed and exterior shots of a green roof.

The roof must be finished before the green roof is applied in order to waterproof it. Some larger roofs may be built with access, but for most residential applications, a green roof is visual, meaning that the view can be enjoyed from a window, but does not allow access. And it is usually on a flat roof — it's not recommended on a sloped roof.

Different plants can be used, and will grow on a growing medium selected by the green roof company, but plants are all selected to handle the hot, dry conditions on most roofs. If you've got a shady space, you may want to consider a moss mat. The one being installed on our shed is a low-growing sedum (4 to 6 inches high), and does not normally require watering.

The cost of installing the Xeroflor system is about $15 per square foot, depending on size and accessibility. Doing it yourself is not recommended for green roofs because of its specific requirements.

Sylvia Putz is a journalist with an interest in decor and design. She's written for the TV show Arresting Design; sputz@arrestingdesign.com.

Holmes heads for magazine world

PUBLISHING Home renovation guru Mike Holmes has built his own magazine.

The beefy contractor is known for his TV series Holmes on Homes and Holmes Inspection, which uncover renovation and construction nightmares.

He says his new venture is called, Holmes: The Magazine to Make it Right. Regular features will include an advice column, an eco-section dedicated to all things green, and a spotlight on Canadian tradespeople at the top of their game.

The periodical will be released across Canada on Monday. Holmes is set to sign copies of the debut issue Monday at a magazine store in Toronto.

"This is the magazine homeowners need to help them with their renovations," Holmes said in a release. "It's the magazine I was searching for and couldn't find. So, I had to make my own magazine, and 'make it right.'"

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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HST looms on horizon

TheHunt
Amit Paul

metronews.ca/thehunt

I'd like to apologize for the dozens of inquiries I still need to respond to as returning from the land Down Under has taken a toll — jetlag, it would seem, is not to be taken lightly. Amongst the many enthralling experiences I had in Australia, a question from a couple of fellow vacationing Torontonians knocked me for a loop. Buyers Nita and Satnam asked me if waiting until their financial situation improved was futile, since — as it seems — the same home they want to buy is going to be priced $50,000 more at that time. Makes you cringe, doesn't it? It shouldn't, and here's why.

To understand where we're headed, let's first look at the market today. October 2009 saw a total of 8,476 sales, up an incredible 64 per cent from last year, alongside an average price of $423,559, up 20 per cent. How did this happen when we're supposed to be in a recession? Well, the unique supply vs. demand we were faced with this year seriously skewed these numbers. At the onset of 2009, many owners decided not to sell, fearing the short end of the stick. At the same time, many buyers sought to cash in on the buyer's market. The result, as anyone familiar with the first rule of economics will tell you, was unexpectedly high sale prices for the few homes on the market, as multiple buyers were forced to fight over limited listings.

Looming on the horizon for 2010 is everyone's favourite tax hike — HST. In a nutshell, HST will affect the actual price of real estate that is new only, but will affect many of the services that are associated with resale homes, as well as new, such as commissions, legal fees, moving costs, etc.

But I don't expect HST to breed as dramatic a real estate market shift as the simple dynamics of supply and demand did this year, simply because I expect supply and demand to balance off. This year was more the result of a very unique imbalance between supply and demand, and we've learned that HST will likely fail to have as dramatic an impact. Translation: Every home will not scorch to $50,000 higher, in a year's time. Now having said all of that, I did tell my new friends that the prudent buyer would not overlook the time of year we're in.

One of the worst kept secrets in real estate is that no matter what someone tells you, nobody actually wants to sell when it's -20 C outside. In other words, while the home you're considering isn't necessarily going to jump $50K, it's almost certainly going to be at least somewhat more attainable and affordable now.

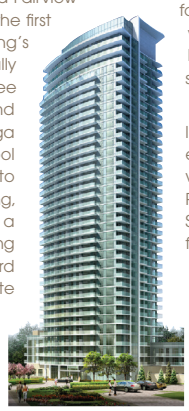
Amit is a Realtor/Developer with Re/Max; amitp@rogers.com

EMERALD CITY
CONDOMINIUMS

RESOUNDING SUCCESS MARKS EMERALD CITY'S ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Just over one year ago, EL-AD Group introduced Emerald City at Sheppard Avenue accross from Fairview Mall. This master-planned community will be surrounded by green space, tree-lined walkways, lush parks and ground floor retail space.

Emerald City offers direct connection to the Sheppard subway and Fairview Mall from the lower level of the first 36-storey tower. The building's amenities include a fully equipped gym, a Gymboree with kid-sized equipment and play space, private yoga studio and an indoor pool with whirlpool that opens onto the outdoors. For entertaining, there is The Emerald Club with a party room, full wet bar, catering kitchen, fireplace, lounge, card and billiard tables and private screening theatre as well as a rooftop Terrace with reflecting pool, sunbathing deck, private cabanas and barbecue area.



Suites offer ceiling heights of 9 and 10 feet, pre-engineered hardwood flooring, granite kitchen countertops and more. Choose from one-bedroom, one-bedroom + den, two-bedroom and three-bedroom suites priced from the high $200,000s, including one parking space per suite. EL-AD Group provides a free TTC Metropass for one year on all suites as well as a limited-time cash back of up to $15,000 on selected suites!

EL-AD Group is one of the largest and most trusted real estate organizations in the world. The Emerald City Presentation Centre is on Sheppard Avenue, across from Fairview Mall.

Hours are Monday to Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, Sunday and holidays from noon to 5 p.m.; Friday closed.

For more information
call 416-492-0001 or visit www.emeraldcitycondos.ca

How will HST affect me?

LegalMatters

Jeffrey D. Cowan

metronews.ca/legalmatters

Q I am in the process of purchasing a new condominium which is not scheduled to close until 2011. My developer has produced a long 20-page contract that is full of all kinds of legal jargon and page upon page of small print that I don't understand. One of the biggest questions I have centres around the new Harmonized Sales Tax that is supposed to be implemented for new home constructions that close after July 1, 2010. I am at a loss as to what to do.

A This first thing you need to be aware of is that you have a 10-day cooling off period after your offer is accepted by the builder during which you can decide whether you really want the unit and if it suits you. This is a time when you can take your agreement of purchase and sale to a lawyer for review.

As you are aware, the Ontario provincial government brought in legislation last June to introduce a harmonized sales tax (HST) which it is thought will affect the purchase of new homes but not resale transactions. The percentage figure is an additional eight per cent which on a $600,000 home could be an additional $48,000 in taxes.

The magic figure that is being bantered around is that any new home under $400,000 in value that is being purchased by first time home buyers will be exempt from the HST. Considering that the average home in the Toronto area is approaching $400,000, that leaves a lot of people still paying some of the HST.

A second more confusing aspect to all of this is who is responsible for paying the HST. It has been our position as lawyers acting on behalf of purchasers that if at all possible, the builder should be the one bearing the cost of the HST; however, as July 1, 2010 fast approaches, more and more builders are transferring this cost to the purchasers. An exception to this rule is if you signed an Agreement of Purchase and Sale before June 18, 2009 prior to the provincial government introducing this new levy.

Needless to say, there is still vast confusion about who pays and what are the cutoff dates and purchaser amounts under which you pay nothing, a portion or all of the HST.

We are currently seeing dramatic increases in sales and prices in real estate in the GTA with first time homebuyers eager to enter the market and take advantage of low interest rates and pre-HST price hikes.

How this will affect the housing market post July 1, 2010 is anybody's guess.

Jeffrey D. Cowan is the principal of Cowan & Taylor, Barristers & Solicitors, jeff@cowanandtaylor.com. The information contained in this article should not be relied upon as legal advice.

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Location, Location, Location?

Where You Live Can Impact Your Car Insurance Rate

How Much Is Your Postal Code Costing You?

We've all heard that when it comes to real estate, the biggest driver of your success is location. Can the same be said for getting the lowest car insurance rate? The answer is – sort of.

Insurance companies do use a wide variety of risk factors when setting premiums, and where you live is one of them. The question each insurance company tries to answer is "how likely is it a policyholder living in [insert location here] will make a claim and how much will that claim cost to pay out if there is a loss?" If you live in an area that a given insurance company knows to have a high claims rate, all things being equal, you can expect to pay more than someone living in an area with a lower claims rate.

Should I Consider Moving To Get A Better Rate?

Probably not. If you are like most people, picking up and moving to another neighbourhood in hopes of saving money on your car insurance is likely not an option. And the truth is, even if you did move, there's no guarantee you'd get a lower rate, since each insurance company sets its rates independently and can change them up to 4 times per year according to a wide variety of factors of which your location is only one.

What's The REAL Secret To Lowering Your Rate?

The simplest and easiest thing you can do to lower your rate right now is to SHOP AROUND. Why? Because the rates charged by different insurance companies to insure the same driver, with the same car, for the same coverage, can vary by hundreds and even thousands of dollars. Take a look at the table below.

The key is finding the one insurance company that can offer the lowest rate available for your driving profile. InsuranceHotline.com offers an independent, unbiased rate comparison from over 30 top insurance companies to find you the lowest rate for your profile and then connects you with a licensed broker or agent who can provide the policy. It is fast, safe and FREE.

Start Saving Your Money Now.

InsuranceHotline.com puts you in the driver seat by making insurance companies compete for your business. Think of it as a one-stop shop for lowering your car insurance rate.

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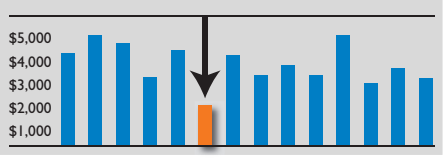

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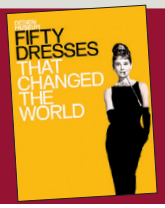
Theallet wins fashion award

Sophie Theallet, a Frenchwoman-turned-New-Yorker. has won the prestigious CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund award, which supports emerging designers. The prize includes $200,000 US and a year's worth of mentoring. KENYA HUNT/METRO WORLD NEWS

Style



Dressed for impact

When it comes to cultural importance, there are 50 dresses that hold iconic status, according to London's Design Museum. In its latest release, Fifty Dresses That Changed the World(Conran), the museum takes readers on a literary tour of beautiful designs and the famous women who wore them, including Jackie Kennedy, Twiggy, Cher and Princess Diana. The book is available at Chapters and Indigo stores across Canada for $26. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Fashion's sweeter side

Ralph Lauren's daughter brings Dylan's Candy Bar to Holt's

JANINE FALCON
for Metro Canada

What do former U.S. president Bill Clinton, A-Rod and Janet Jackson have in common?

An appreciation for sweet treats from Dylan's Candy Bar, a New York City mecca of jellybeans, sour gums, chocolates, toffee, gummy bears, licorice, whirly pops and related apparel, accessories and spa products.

A selection of the most popular offerings is now also available at Holt Renfrew in Canada. "Everyone likes candy," says founder Dylan Lauren.

The daughter of iconic American fashion designer Ralph Lauren, Lauren says her own eye for design drew her to pop art, graphic design and packaging. She calls candy her passion, kickstarted by a Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory viewing when she was five.

And even before the launch of Dylan's Candy Bar, candy had already become part of her professional life during a stretch with her own event-planning company. "Interestingly, I always used candy as decorative accents," she told Metro.

Now her mission is to "elevate candy so it's not just for self-consumption," she says. "Good quality candy makes great gifts." It's also easy to customize for corporate clients; Dylan's Candy Bar was a sweet part of the Barbie-turns-50 celebrations earlier this year.

In-demand items include brightly coloured whirly pops, candied popcorn, super-sized chocolate bars and candy time capsules featuring popular era-specific sweets, such as candy necklaces, gobstoppers, Pop Rocks and Wonka Bars from the '70s; and Bubble Tape, Bubble Gum Cigarettes, Nerds and Big League Chew from the '80s. "Nostalgia's a huge thing right now, especially during the recession," Lauren notes.

While a variety of Dylan's Candy Bar offerings are marketplace favourites such as Jolly Ranchers, Starbursts, Hot Tamales and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, many are unique to the brand.

"We work with our suppliers to put our own twist on things," says Lauren, offering her Everything But the Kitchen Sink as an example. "The original had fewer components. Ours has seven — pretzels, popcorn, cashews, toffee, peanuts, graham crackers and marshmallows."

DERYCK LEWIS

Dylan Lauren, founder of Dylan's Candy Bar

"Nostalgia's a huge thing right now, especially during the recession."
Dylan Lauren

Dylan's Candy Bar Birthday Cake Batter Soda Pop Shower Gel, $16.

Below, Coconut Bon-Bon Body Smoothie Lotion, $16.

Left, Chocolate Cupcake Candy Butter Cream, $22.

Above, Dylan's Candy Bar two-pound Milk Chocolate Bar, $36. Right, Candyland Gift Basket, $170.

Mrs. O dazzles at state dinner

Designer Naeem Khan created first lady's gown

First lady Michelle Obama chose to wear a gleaming silver-sequined, cream-colored gown Tuesday night to the first state dinner held by her husband's administration.

She was tending to her hostess duties in a strapless silhouette with the beads forming an abstract floral pattern that was custom-made by Naeem Khan.

She wore a matching wrap, a stack of bangle bracelets on her wrist and dangling earrings.

The guests of honour at the dinner were Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his wife, Gursharan Kaur, making Mrs. Obama's choice of the Indian-born, U.S.-based designer seem very appropriate.

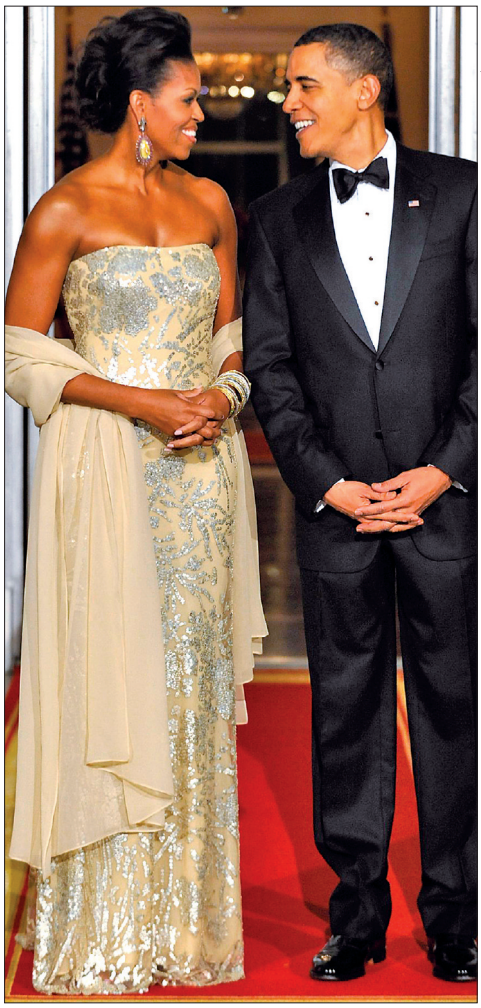
Earlier in the day, for a preview of the event, Mrs. Obama wore a skirt by Rachel Roy, also an Indian-American.

"That gave us a preview that she was going to use clothes to convey a meaning," said Mary Tomer, author of the new book Mrs. O: The Face of Fashion Democracy.

"They were really thoughtful choices," she said. "The nice thing about it is the Jackie Kennedy sort of appropriateness. Most people wouldn't know one way or another about Naeem's background, but if one sentence gets mentioned to the prime minister, then her subtleness would pay off," added Hal Rubenstein, fashion director for InStyle magazine.

Khan told CNN's Larry King that his goals were to dress the first lady in something "Indian, chic, simple but very glamourous."

Rubenstein said he was impressed that Mrs. Obama used her fashion knowledge to choose a sophisticated and regal style that paid homage to India without wearing a traditional sari-style dress, which could have come off as a costume next to India's first lady.



SUSAN WALSH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. President Barack Obama and First lady Michelle Obama are seen before welcoming India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur to a state dinner at the White House.

"Naeem's work is known for glamour and embellishment and this dress seems to embody that. She's sparkling and radiant."
Mary Tomer, author

"I think she looks fabulous," said Tomer. "She walked out in something that's figure-flattering and chic. Naeem's work is known for glamour and embellishment and this dress seems to embody that. She's sparkling and radiant."

Designer Khan is no stranger to helping women make a grand entrance; he has become a fixture on the Hollywood red-carpet circuit, dressing Beyoncé, Carrie Underwood, Katherine Heigl and even Queen Noor of Jordan.

Mrs. Obama's gown took three weeks at the designer's family workshop in India — with 40 people working on it — to complete, Khan said.

Of Mrs. Obama, Rubenstein said: "She looks like she's worth her weight in solid gold. What I love about her is that it's a pleasure to watch a woman of size and stature not apologize for her height and know how to stand tall."

President Barack Obama also drew Rubenstein's praise with his classic-style tuxedo. "I often feel Obama's suits are too big on him, but I think he got a new tux."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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ELLE CANADA

Editors' Pick

KICK IT

Classic black? You can wear that anytime. This holiday season, go for no-holds-barred glamour with texture and unexpected colour combinations. Make a statement in navy-and-gold brocade. Platform stilettos, H&M ($60, hm.com)

Anna Wallne, left, and Kristina Matisic

TRIED & TESTED

Anna Wallner and Kristina Matisic have become Canada's style arbiters, trying almost every fashion and cooking technique imaginable as the stars of The Shopping Bags. Their new show, Anna & Kristina's Beauty Call, is a natural progression for the former news reporters. In this latest venture, Wallner and Matisic attend coveted fashion gatherings such as New York Fashion Week and meet some of the world's hottest designers. Then, after chatting with experts, they recreate the runway makeup, hairstyles and fashions on a budget.

COCKTAIL DRESS

Bustier styles party all night long.

ADVICE Strapless party frocks look best on gals with broad shoulders—but avoid the style if you have a fuller chest. For a great fit, try one that has a built-in bra. There are two major options: tailored '50s couture in satin or '80s disco diva in Lycra.

HOW TO WEAR IT Since this dress bares the neck and shoulders, wear an ornate necklace. On chilly nights, top it off with a boyfriend blazer or cardigan. For a fashion-forward look, add leather gloves and platform booties.

Stretch polyester, RW&CO. ($88, rw-co.com)

Cotton and polyester, Miss Sixty ($219, info@sixtycanada.com)

Silk, Fullcircle ($345, 1-866-240-2808)

Polyester and acetate, Jacob ($129, jacob.ca)

Polyester, Only ($89, 1-800-338-4392)

Looks from the Chanel Cruise 2010 collection, complete with '30s-inspired hair and makeup; the invite to the show.

LIFE ON THE LIDO

Inspired by Luchino Visconti's moody Death in Venice, Karl Lagerfeld set the scene for the Chanel Cruise 2010 collection outside the Grand Hotel Excelsior along the Lido, where the film was shot in 1971. In lieu of aristocratic families and dark desires, more than 300 guests, including fashion journalists, celebrities and some of Chanel's top clients from around the world, were there to enjoy the spectacle. The rumbling of the Adriatic Sea was pierced by music played by a violinist and a cellist and a rap recording by Lagerfeld. The models, in '30s-style hair and makeup, strutted the catwalk/boardwalk in nautical-inspired knitwear, cream chiffon gowns and rich bronze dresses.

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Designers cook up a storm
Scores of designers including Nicole Miller, Peter Som, Cynthia Rowley and Devi Kroell have contributed recipes to the new American Fashion Cookbook(Assouline), which is available at amazon.ca for $35.64. METRO NEWS SERVICES

In Milan, fashion players invoke 'normal' and 'boring'

It's back to the basics for the Italian fashion scene. Major players gathered in Milan this week for an industry summit say the world economic crisis has pushed the fashion industry to the brink, and called for — gasp! — a return to normal, an embrace of the boring.

Participants including CEO Andrea Guerra of the Luxottica eyewear company and Ferragamo CEO Michele Norsa said the key to survival is to concentrate on the core product after industrywide cost-cutting.

"We need to return to being more boring. That means if we are good at eyewear, we need to make eyewear and thank goodness for 49 years we have made only eyewear. Others thought the time was ripe to do everything, and they now see that doing everything was a disaster."

More than anything, the crisis has defined a new normal, he said.

"There is no going back. (People) think that this is the critical moment, but I am convinced that 2005, 2006 and 2007 were the years of unreality," Guerra said, with unchecked growth and free spending. "This is a new world, it is not about declines and crashes. It is normal growth."

Norsa said the industry must reckon with permanent shifts in spending patterns. "We have lost consumers who spent without looking at prices," Norsa said.

Sales growth will fall five per cent in 2009 after a modest four per cent growth last year, according to a study by Bank of America-Merrill Lynch.

In general, the biggest companies with annual revenues above 300 million euros are doing the best, said Paula Durante, a luxury analyst at Merrill Lynch.

Apparel is being especially hard hit this year, because most orders are made months in advance, while accessories are the most resilient category, Durante said.

Mario Boselli, head of the Milan Fashion Chamber, said the Italian government has not yet formulated a response to help the fashion industry.

"There is a slow recovery, but that is a problem. You can't recover so slowly and without energy or you risk losing a lot of this country's wealth," Boselli told the gathering.

Boselli said he expects to see the worst when full-year earnings come out in the winter with revenues dropping on average of 15 to 20 per cent. He expects more small companies to close and others to seek bankruptcy protection.

"An intervention has to be in the interest of the government in terms of costs and benefits," he said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"(People) think that this is the critical moment, but I am convinced that 2005, 2006 and 2007 were the years of unreality."
Andrea Guerra, CEO, Luxottica

In brief

GOODWILL Do something good for your "sole": Women across Canada are being invited to bring their favourite previously loved shoes, boots or handbags to any Nine West, Easy Spirit, Nine West Shoe Studio or Madison Shoes & Accessories store and get $20 off any $100 purchase. All donations received at these stores, including gently used children's shoes and boots, will be given to the local Goodwill outlet in each market, to support its job training and employment services. The campaign runs until Dec. 13.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Victoria's biggest show yet

Lingerie brand Victoria's Secret taped its biggest fashion show yet last week with an eye-popping opening look worn by Alessandra Ambrosio of neon angel wings. KENYA HUNT/METRO WORLD NEWS

Haute horror

Fall 2009 runways looked like a summit of vampires and witches

These are dark days, indeed. You can't round a corner without encountering a vampire.

They lurk on bookstore shelves in the House of Night series. They invade your home with TV's The Vampire Diaries and True Blood. They loom large on the silver screen in The Vampire's Assistant and the upcoming Daybreakers.

And recently, the bloodletting turns torrential as The Twilight Saga: New Moon opened in cinemas.

With so many bloodsuckers in pop culture right now, it's not surprising fashion is embracing the dark arts. At cosmetic counters, dark eyes, nails and lips abound.

Fall runways looked like a summit of vampires, witches and goths with a bewitching mix of black lace, long crow's feathers, feral-looking fur, dramatic stand-up collars and peaked shoulders.

"Fashion has always been fascinated with goth," says Barbara Akin, vice-president of fashion direction for Holt Renfrew. "We love black and the underground. This is like an anti-fashion fashion statement in a way."

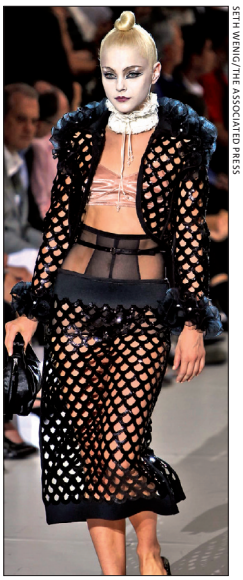
"It all harks back to the Victorian age. Romanticism is always part of that. It's that edge we tether on, the romanticism of life and the dark side."

And it's this brooding romantic route designers took. Instead of aiming for the jugular, they went for the heart. Designers such as Olivier Theyskens, in his final collection at Paris fashion house Nina Ricci, went full glam goth for fall. His models, in their dramatic gowns, perched on towering cantilevered platforms looked more like dark angels than queens of the damned.

Goth style is now more glamorous and sensual, more Angelina Jolie than Morticia Addams, making it one trend that translates easily at the retail level. "You don't need to go head-to-toe black. Just pick one element, whether it's an earring or necklace, and mix it with something feminine," advises Pam Chorley, owner of Queen West boutique Fashion Crimes.

The trend has also bitten into men's clothing. Alexander McQueen's fall menswear collection featured menacing Transylvanian-looking toughs who look as if they fight not with fists, but fangs. Since few men aspire to look like Dracula, the trend taps into a deeper desire: to look like a rock star.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE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DAMIEN MEYER/GETTY IMAGES

FRANCOIS GUILLOT/GETTY IMAGES

From left, looks from Marc Jacobs' spring 2010 collection; Alexander McQueen's fall-winter 2009-2010 collection; and Olivier Theyskens for Nina Ricci's autumn/winter 2009 ready-to-wear collection.

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

Surgery for Long-Term Weight Loss

Statistics Canada reports that two out of three Canadians are overweight. According to the most recent Canadian Community Health Survey, around 5.5 million adult citizens find themselves at greater risk of developing chronic health problems due to excess weight. Among these problems are heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney failure, arthritis, back pain, hormonal abnormalities and cancer. Weight loss options are rampant, but few are able to produce sustainable results. More than ever, these figures indicate a real need for an effective, permanent weight loss solution.

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Rihanna booked for New Year's Eve
Rihanna will earn $500,000 US to perform at a New Year's Eve party. She has been asked to sing at the Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi to help revellers see in 2010 in what will be her first performance in the Middle East. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Entertainment

Purple gain
While she is said to have scoffed at the idea of posing for Playboy, Lindsay Lohan is reportedly ready to get provocative for a photo spread in France's Purple magazine.
LIFE & STYLE WEEKLY

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Rihanna makes R-rated return

Boyle, Lambert, Shakira also release new music

Adam Lambert

Album: For Your Entertainment
Label: RCA/Sony
Rating: ●●●½

ADAM LAMBERT IS an Idol with staying power. And every time he gets kicked off a TV show for being provocative, just adds to his attraction. (Didn't they try that in the '50s with Elvis?). He's got it all, maybe a little bit too much. But the talent is unmistakably there, whether he's performing vocal acrobatics a la Freddy Mercury (opening track Music Again) or crooning out heartfelt love aches (Broken Open). The theatrical chameleon who mesmerized American Idol viewers continues to try on new clothes and his fans will happily take in the fashion show. Lambert's debut album suffers at times from the heavy hand of Idol production techniques. It will be interesting to see what he has in store for us with his next.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

AlbumReviews

music@metronews.ca

Rihanna

Album: Rated R
Label: Def Jam/Universal
Rating: ●●●½

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE relationship trauma to get the creative juices flowing. On Rihanna's fourth record the Barbados-born starlet turns her terrible experiences with Chris Brown into a fiery and moving disc. While there's nothing explicitly referencing Brown's brutal attack, lines like "I thought I saw your potential, guess that's what made me dumb," on Stupid in Love does give listeners a glimpse into Rihanna's complex life. Musically, most of the tunes are stellar — they're haunting, dark and befitting of the album's name. There's nothing quite as catchy as Umbrella, but this is still a repeat-worthy record.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Rihanna has turned her experiences with Chris Brown into the fiery and moving new album Rated R.

Susan Boyle

Album: I Dreamed a Dream
Label: Columbia/Sony
Rating: ●●●

JUST THE THOUGHT of Susan Boyle covering Wild Horses, the Rolling Stones' classic country raunch ballad, should be enough to send music fans running for manure shovels. But sometimes it's best to leave preconceptions at the stable door. Boyle somehow pulls off the impossible. There is a wonderfully unique lilt to her English schoolgirl voice that drags the song's full five minutes. Ditto with her Streisand-like take on the great American standard, Cry Me a River. Yet, one has to wonder if the world really needs more recorded versions of Amazing Grace, Silent Night, or ... gasp ... The Monkees' Daydream Believer.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Shakira

Album: She Wolf
Label: Epic Sony
Rating: ●●●

YOU CAN APPROACH this album in one of two ways — 1) the latest instalment of trash from the jiggle queen of pop, or 2) an artfully crafted piece of camp to be taken with a nod and a wink rather than a snicker and a sneer. Let's say we give Shakira the benefit of the doubt and go with Door No. 2. There had to be a comic hand at work crafting lyrics like "I'm starting to feel just a little abused, like a coffee machine in an office." But seriously, Shakira shows some decent vocal chops here, especially when the Auto-Tune gets (apparently) turned off on tracks like Gypsy and Did It Again.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Lady Gaga

Album: The Fame Monster
Label: Interscope/Universal
Rating: ●●●

WITH HER FLAMBOYANT behaviour and over-the-top costumes, it's easy to forget that it was Lady Gaga songs that catapulted her into the spotlight. Her new eight-song EP — which is also packaged with her debut as a deluxe version — pushes her songwriting skills (and those of her songwriters) even further, tackling Shakira-like Latin on Alejandro and jangly soul on Teeth. It's clear that Gaga doesn't want to be a one-album wonder.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Jully Black

Album: The Black Book
Label: Universal
Rating: ●●½

THERE'S ONE INDISPUTABLE fact about Toronto's Jully Black: She may have the best pipes in the country. Unfortunately, she's never quite found out how to turn her talent into worldwide success. Her latest won't achieve that goal — it's a misguided attempt at broadening her fan base by tackling run-of-the-mill rock. Recalculate is her biggest miss — it's a driving guitar-soaked track that could be sung by any popular singer. It's the R&B tunes on this record that standout. Let's hope her rock experiment ends soon.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

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Wedding bells for Penelope?
Penelope Cruz is rumoured to be getting married in December. The Spanish actress is reportedly planning her wedding to long-term boyfriend Javier Bardem for next month and is shopping for a dress. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

Jones' latest album offers bonus tunes

In a decade of dwindling record sales, Norah Jones remains one of the few artists to reliably sell millions of albums globally.

Since her 2002 debut Come Away With Me, listeners have followed Jones to the tune of well over 37 million records. And yet, she says she's not immune to the industry's latest tactic for imploring the public to actually shell out real dollars for music.

"These days, everybody wants an extra song," Jones said recently from her home in New York. "A bonus track for iTunes, a bonus track for Amazon, a bonus track for Wal-Mart — you have to make two records all the time."

Indeed, the increasingly urgent push for bonus content has become somewhat taxing for musicians who have also been feeling the financial crunch of an industry in transition. But the demand for extra material has also forced some artists to do what they do best: Get creative.

> **"These days, everybody wants an extra song."**
> Norah Jones

Rapper 50 Cent wrote, produced and directed a film version of his new record, Before I Self-Destruct, that is being tucked in with the regular disc.

Then there's Lady Gaga's The Fame Monster, which can be bought on its own, as a two-disc version that includes her debut album, or in a collector's edition that features various trinkets including paper dolls, a puzzle, 3-D glasses and a lock of her hair.

Although Jones hasn't commissioned anything quite so elaborate for her recently released fourth record, The Fall, she has spent the past couple of years labouring over the 13 tracks that comprise her new album. Initially, she didn't savour the idea of having to generate a knot of new tunes for retailers.

"We thought that a really good way to lessen the pressure on me to have a bunch of extra songs would be to get some remixes done," she said. Jones enlisted the Beastie Boys, Beck and Santigold to rework some of the songs from The Fall for a forthcoming EP. It's a fittingly diverse group to coincide with an album that has amounted to something of a departure — or evolution — for Jones.

Songstress Norah Jones, who has just released her fourth album, aims for a "very different sound."

Sure, the hallmarks are there: The clear-eyed ballads, long pauses and spotless melodies that announce themselves immediately. But signs of change are everywhere. She ditched her longtime band — and Lee Alexander, her former boyfriend, songwriting partner and producer — in favour of a group of seasoned vets. She played guitar more and piano less, and aimed for a "very different sound," she says.

The result: Something of a break-up album, on which Jones pairs some contemplative lyrics with her newly filled-out sound. Okkervil River frontman Will Sheff co-wrote the moody Stuck, on which she asks: "Why don't you leave? Leave me be?"

Ultimately, she found herself inspired to generate enough bonus tunes to please the stores and services that required them. Some versions of the CD come with an extra disc featuring covers of the Kinks' Strangers and Wilco's Jesus, etc.

Jones says she ultimately doesn't mind. "There's a lot of bonus content that people want," she said. "I'm not against it. It's just really difficult to come up with that much stuff. I made the album and I thought that that was enough!" THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander St., hosts Art Attack, a live auction, at 7 p.m. $10. 416-975-8555.

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The One Of A Kind Christmas Show runs through Dec. 6 at the Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place. oneofakindshow.com.

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Air Canada Centre

Anthony Daniels narrates Star Wars: In Concert at the Air Canada Centre. 7:30 pm. $43-$83. 416-870-8000.

MUSIC
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190 Princes' Blvd.

Imogen Heap performs at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, 190 Princes' Blvd. 7:30 p.m. $32.50. ticketmaster.ca.

PERFORMANCE
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Jenn Grant sings at 8 p.m. at the Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. $29.50. glenngouldstudio.cbc.ca

Canadian art to fetch millions

ART The brothers behind today's Heffel fine art auction — which will feature masterworks by Lawren Harris and Tom Thomson — say the event promises to be a standout. David and Robert Heffel expect the auction, with 210 items for sale, to bring in between $11 and $15 million. The most expensive painting is expected to be Harris's The Old Stump, Lake Superior, an oil sketch of North Shore, Lake Superior, which resides in the National Gallery of Canada and is considered to be one of Harris' most important works. It's estimated to sell for about $2 million. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Hoffman skips Fockers reunion

Dustin Hoffman will be absent from the sequel to Meet the Fockers — he's refused to sign up for the latest instalment of the comedy franchise. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sting's spooky take on Christmas

Sting and his wife Trudie keep with tradition on Christmas Eve: They go to a local church, sing along to carols, then head back home to their English estate to open presents with their family.

It's a cheery scene one would expect during the holiday season. But that kind of celebratory mood is absent on his latest album, If On A Winter's Night.

Instead, the seasonal offering features the rocker's interpretations of traditional British songs, ranging from carols to lullabies, that sombrely mark the winter season — definitely not the kind of music for that tree-trimming party.

"I wanted to present something slightly different," explains a bearded Sting.

"There's a fault with a lot of Christmas songs; they are a little bit triumphal: 'Isn't life wonderful, God's in his heaven and I'm rich,"' laughs Sting. "They sort of forget a lot of people aren't."

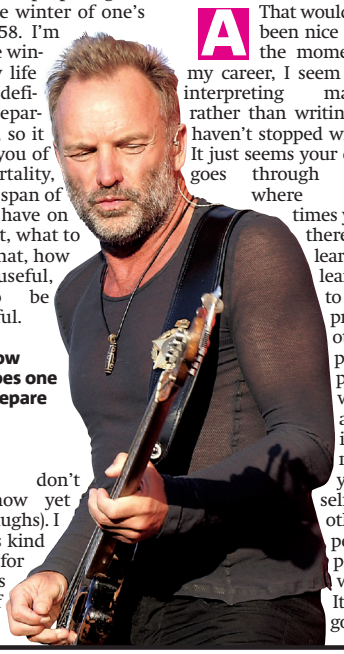
If On A Winter's Night, which Sting will present in a Great Performances concert on PBS on U.S. Thanksgiving, doesn't forget. In a recent interview, Sting explained why he felt compelled to make the CD, being middle age and why he's not giving up on his rock roots.

Q Had you rejected doing a traditional Christmas album in the past?

A I don't think there's any need for me to do one of those kind of records. I think there are enough of them out there and my feeling toward the season is a little bit more ambiguous (laughs). So just to be truthful to my own sensibility, I need to acknowledge that the season is not all joy and light for a lot of people. It's tough — environmentally, emotionally, spiritually. So I wanted to achieve some sort of balance between that sense of traditional Christmas and being home and being warm and being cozy, and also the opposite of those things. A lot of people suffer.

Q When the leaves start to fall and the snow comes, what do you start to think about?

A At this particular time, preparing for the winter of one's life. I'm 58. I'm not in the winter of my life but I'm definitely preparing for it, so it reminds you of your mortality, the short span of years we have on the planet, what to do with that, how to be useful, how to be meaningful.



Q How does one prepare for that?

A I don't know yet (laughs). I think this kind of work for me, this kind of creative work, is my preparation. This is my realm. I did a lot of research for this record. I looked at songs from all different cultures and time periods and genre, anything that mentions snow, ice cold wind or Christmas, and arrived at like 15 or 16 songs that encapsulated my feeling about it. All of the songs are kind of magical. All the stories have a kind of spooky, ghostly quality about them because I think winter's the seasons of ghosts ... I like the season, I like it, I look forward to it, but at the same time, it has a scary aspect to it.

Q Some of these songs are centuries old. Did you consider doing new songs?

A That would have been nice but at the moment in my career, I seem to be interpreting material rather than writing it. I haven't stopped writing. It just seems your career goes through cycles where sometimes you're there to learn. I'm learning to interpret other people's work and immerse yourself in other people's work. It's a good thing to do.

Q There are always people who want to hear the "pop" Sting. What do you say to that?

A I'm constantly doing different stuff, and of course I go back to rock 'n' roll, but I would have learned something from another area and bring something back. I'm not one of these guys who can stay in the same rut.

I constantly want to find out new things. I'm curious.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Bruni to star in film

Woody Allen courts French beauty for next movie

Woody Allen has successfully courted France's first lady, Carla Bruni-Sarkozy.

The former supermodel, who is married to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, says she's agreed to be in the famed director's next film, but doesn't yet know what role he has in store for her.

On Monday, while appearing on Canal Plus television to sing a duet with crooner Harry Connick Jr., she said, "(Woody) asked me to be in his next film," but admitted that she could be a terrible actress. "I'm not at all an actress. Maybe I'll be absolutely terrible," she said.

Asked if Allen had told her what part she would play, Bruni-Sarkozy replied: "No. But I said 'yes'... I do everything a little bit blindly. If I don't, I won't do anything."

Bruni-Sarkozy, who has a son from a relationship before Sarkozy went on to say, "I'd like to — you know — when I'm a grandmother, to have done a Woody Allen film. I cannot in my life miss an opportunity like this."

Bruni-Sarkozy added that the bespectacled cinematic legend also asked her not to make another film before his. "If this ever comes about, it'll be a great experience," she said.

Bruni-Sarkozy, now a singer-songwriter, has largely shelved her concert tour plans to make way for her responsibilities as France's First Lady.

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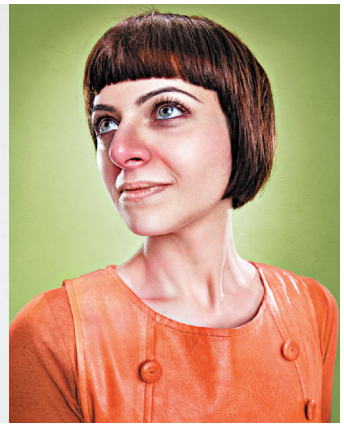

Dancing judge undergoes spinal surgery
Dancing With the Stars judge Carrie Ann Inaba was scheduled to have surgery yesterday morning in Los Angeles to relieve pressure and stiffness in her neck caused by spinal stenosis. PEOPLE.COM

Court grants Polanski bail

Pays up $4.5 million but must remain under house arrest

The Swiss Criminal Court granted director Roman Polanski bail on Wednesday, accepting US$4.5 million to allow him to remain under house arrest and monitored by an electronic bracelet at his chalet in the Swiss resort of Gstaad.

The Swiss Justice Ministry, which ordered him arrested on Sept. 26 as he arrived in Zurich to receive a lifetime achievement award at a film festival, said it still viewed him as a flight risk. But Polanski wasn't immediately released. He will stay in prison for up to 10 days while the Swiss government decides whether to appeal.

The verdict does not affect the Swiss Justice Ministry's ongoing assessment of whether Polanski should be extradited to the United States for having sex in 1977 with a 13-year-old girl, after plying her with champagne and a Quaalude pill at a modelling shoot.

He was initially indicted on six felony counts, including rape by use of drugs, child molesting and sodomy. Polanski pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of unlawful sexual intercourse. In exchange, the judge agreed to drop the remaining charges and sentence him to prison for a 90-day psychiatric evaluation.

The evaluator released Polanski after 42 days, but the judge said he would send him back to serve out the 90 days. Polanski then fled the country on Feb. 1, 1978, the day he was to be sentenced and has lived in France since.

Director Roman Polanski will be monitored by an electronic bracelet while under house arrest in at his Swiss chalet.

"The 76-year-old appellant is married and the father of two minors," the court said, as it considered Polanski's offer of a cash bail secured by his apartment in Paris. "It can be assumed that as a responsible father he will, especially in view of his advanced age, attach greater importance to the financial security of his family."

"We will decide quickly on whether to order his release or file an appeal with the Federal Tribunal," Justice Ministry spokesman Folco Galli said. Authorities had 10 days to refer the matter to the tribunal, Switzerland's highest court, but Galli said they would make their decision before that. The Federal Tribunal said it had yet to receive an appeal. The decision came as a surprise. Swiss legal experts had said earlier that Polanski's chances of bail were slim.

Polanski claims the judge and prosecutors in his initial trial acted improperly. A California appeals court will listen to oral arguments from his attorneys next month. They will be urging the court to order a lower court to decide whether to dismiss charges against the fugitive director, whether he is present or not.

A decision on extraditing Polanski to Los Angeles is still pending, and would also be subject to appeals.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former teen idol Osmond latest TV Dancing champ

TELEVISION Donny Osmond was declared the new champion of Dancing With Stars on Tuesday night, taking home the show's mirror ball trophy in the season finale of the ABC contest reality program.

Donny Osmond

The former teen pop star of the singing Osmond family said the show has been a highlight in a career of ups and downs. "I did it!" he exclaimed, then promptly rushed to the audience, plucked out his wife, Debbie, and carried her across the stage.

Helping push Osmond over the top was the tango he performed with his professional dancing partner, Kym Johnson. Judge Carrie Ann Inaba hailed it as "artistry in motion." It earned the top score of the final performance. Three celebrities made it to the finale of the show's ninth season: Osmond, Mya and Kelly osbourne — the daughter of Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne. The picks a winner with a combination of judges' scores and viewer votes. Dancing with the Stars consistently ranked as one of the most-watched shows of the fall.

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primetime 11/26/09	265	353	2	TVO	Super Structures (N)		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		Occupation (Part 3 of 3) (N)		Masterworks (N)		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Survivor: Samoa (N)		The Office "Niagara"		90210 (HDTV)		News Final
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	Omni News: Italian Edition (N)		Vivere V	Omni News:	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Carbon Hunters (N)		The Border "Dark Ride"		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	NFL Football	TBA	30 Rock	30 Rock	Curb-Enthsm	Curb-Enthsm	The Jay Leno Show (N)		News
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Access H.	The Vampire Diaries		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		The Mentalist (HDTV)		CTV News
	218	345	11	CHCH	*The Animal* ★ (2001, Comedy) Rob Schneider.				*National Lampoon's Van Wilder* ★★ (2002, Comedy)				News at 11 (N)
	-	-	14	-	Family Guy	The Office	Omni News: S. Asian Edition		Omni News: Cantonese Edition		Two/Half Men	King	TBA
	213	326	15	SUN	The Insider (N)	George Lopez	Funniest Pets	Funniest Pets	Supernatural (HDTV)		The Insider	Hitchcock Pres	Becker
	-	387	16	CBS	NFL Football	Access H.	Survivor: Samoa (N)		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		The Mentalist (HDTV)		News 4 at 11
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	The Office "Niagara"		NBC's People of the Year (N)		The Jay Leno Show (N)		News
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving		Beyoncé ... I Am Yours		Paul McCartney-New York City		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Degrassi: TNG	TMZ (N)	*Night at the Museum* ★★ (2006, Comedy) Ben Stiller.		*Cinderella Man* ★★★ (2005, Biography) Russell Crowe, Renée Zellweger, Paul Giamatti.				A News
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy	Two/Half Men					Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
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news	502	390	26	NW	Connect Today's biggest stories. (N)				CBC News: The National		The Nature of Things		National
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	575	583	38	CMT	Funniest Home Videos		Reba	Reba	According-Jim	According-Jim	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Unstable
	616	521	39	SHO	The Outer Limits		Da Vinci's City Hall		Found.	Paradise Falls	Saving Grace (HDTV) (N)		NCIS
	620	523	40	BVO	Storytellers	PhotoXplorers	Bathroom Divas-Opera Star		*Eighteen* (2004, Drama) Brendan Fletcher. (DVS)				Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		X-Weighted "Monaca"		X-Weighted		X-Weighted "Diane"		ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	Ice Road Truckers		Ancient Discoveries		Underworld Histories		Life After People		Disaster
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Hot Box	Jon Dore Show	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Holmes Inspection		Renovation	Disaster DIY	House Hunters	House Hunters	Holmes
	294	529	47	TBS	Family Guy	Family Guy	House-Payne	House-Payne	Law & Order: SVU		*Daddy's Little Girls* ★★ (2007, Romance)		
	576	582	49	BET	Monica: Still	*The Color Purple* ★★★ (1985, Drama) Whoopi Goldberg, Danny Glover, Margaret Avery.							Mo'Nique
	627	528	50	SPC	Stargate Atlantis (DVS)		Star Trek: Voyager		Primeval		Eureka (N)		InnerSpace (N)
	581	566	52	MTV	The City	After	Super Sweet	Super Sweet	Real World-Road Rules		Gone Too Far		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	The Outer Limits		ET Canada	TV Made, Do It	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld
	603	561	56	FOOD	Ricardo	Road Grill	Restaurant Makeover		Heston's Feasts (N)		Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Family
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		On the Buses	'Allo, 'Allo!	Darwin's Lost Paradise (N)		Darwin's Lost Paradise (N)		God Bless
	621	527	63	STR	Look-A-Like	TMZ	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		The View (HDTV)		The Dr. Oz Show (HDTV)		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Backyardigans	Nght Grdn	Waybuloo	Franklin	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Babar	Zigby	Max & Ruby
	526	507	249	VIVA	Cold Case		Missing "Truth or Dare"		The Closer		Cold Case		Psychic Inv.
	300	601	301	M1	(7:15) *Doubt* ★★★ (2008, Drama) Meryl Streep.				*Crossing Over* ★ (2009, Drama) Harrison Ford.				*Eagle Eye*
	305	612	306	PIX	(6:50) *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* (1970, Comedy)				*Anaconda* ★ (1997, Suspense), Ice Cube			*Partners in Action* (2002)	
	520	-	-	DISC	Daily Planet (N)		Life "Birds" (N)		Life "Insects" (N)		MythBusters		Daily Planet
	637	-	-	TVLND	Red Green	Red Green	Fantasy Island		Hart to Hart		Andy Griffith	Phil Silvers	Bizarre
	605	-	-	FASH	America's Next Top Model		FashionTele	RAW	Canada's Next Top Model		America's Next Top Model		Australia's

critics'corner

Anaconda
This horror tale's premise had potential but sinks lower than a snake's belly in its execution, specifically its two-dimensional characters and disappointing special effects. Jon Voight hams it up as a snake hunter who enlists a documentary crew to accompany him on his quest for an elusive giant reptile, which proceeds to pick them off before you can say "anaconda chow." Jennifer Lopez and Ice Cube also star — if you care. 11:45 AM on PIX

NFL Football
Today's annual Thanksgiving Day game in Detroit between the Lions and the Green Bay Packers commences seven hours of NFL football and no doubt provides welcome respite for many from food, parades and family interaction. Aaron Rodgers and the Pack hope to improve their chances of landing a playoff berth against one of the worst teams in the game in Matthew Stafford and the Lions. After this, the Cowboys and Oakland Raiders go at it down in Dallas on CBS. 12:30 PM on CITY FOX

Jamie Oliver readies new show

British chef Jamie Oliver recently wrapped up shooting his upcoming reality TV series. Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution is scheduled to air on ABC next year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Urban Foodie

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STEPHANIE DICKISON
TorontoUrbanFoodie@gmail.com

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No website

Rating: ●●●½
Dinner & drinks for 2: $60

Berkshire Pork and Onion Dumplings ($9) crunch and crackle, oozing spicy juices. Seafood Crepes ($10) are thickly stuffed with shrimp, mussels and assorted veg and spices and served alongside spritely dressed greens splayed on a wooden plank. This modern Korean delights the table, but pass on the Kimchi Trio ($5). It's laughably teeny.

Start with hearty apps, because the "middle dishes" as they are called, are simply tapas size — The Grilled Short Ribs ($15), for example, is not an entrée by any means.

Spicy Chicken & Potato ($15) sits atop a flame in a cast iron pot. A large leg and drumstick is cushioned amongst scant slivers of potato and see-thru noodles, in a thick dark sauce with a kick.

The meat falls off the bone and combined with the noodles, is rich and comforting.

The modern décor is spacious and sleek with a mix of modern and rustic — unfinished wood floors underneath glossy glazed tables; brilliant chandeliers are offset by heavy ceramic pots in matte finish.

Our servers (one is an owner) however, mostly treat us like we're an inconvenience throughout the meal, though our waitress flashes a smile — twice.

That's a shame, because I would have gone back.

On the web

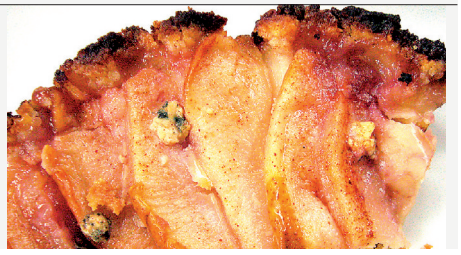
- Get recipes and more great food content at metronews.ca/recipes

STEPHANIE DICKISON/FOR METRO TORONTO

Spicy Chicken and Potato ($15)

Global Peasant blog online

- Travel along with Diane Thompson's culinary adventures in her Global Peasant blog.
- Check out metronews.ca/globalpeasant for a recipe of Thin Pear Tart.



Dining out

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD
Diners can now enjoy eco-certified Atlantic salmon served fresh from Canada's East Coast year round at the Fairmont Royal York's restaurants. Trios Bistro at the Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre Hotel also offers delicious Ocean Wise certified, environmentally-conscious seafood choices as well.

FESTIVE FEAST
From now until Friday, Dec. 11, you can enjoy Eight Wine Bar and Restaurant's Festive Luncheon Buffet for $24.95/person (plus tax and gratuity). There are two seatings available — noon and 1:30 p.m, Monday to Friday. To book a table, call 416.945.5467 or visit eightwinebar.com

In brief

CHEF NOTES On Monday, attend An Evening with Thomas Keller (Chef/Proprietor of French Laundry, etc) at the Toronto Reference Library. Tickets are $80 at The Cook Book Store or call 416-920.2665.

GET SCHOOLED The Calphalon Culinary Center (425 King St.) has a host of new cooking classes in the new year. For a complete class schedule, visit CalphalonCulinaryCenter.com.

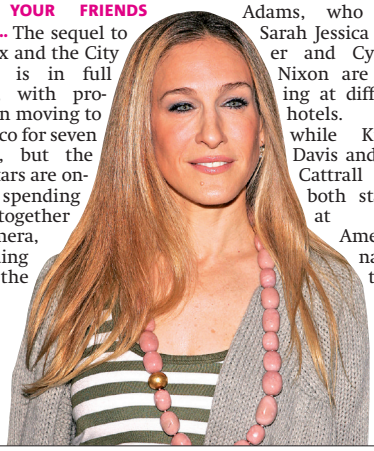
Jon Voight's Christmas wish list
Jon Voight admits that all he wants for Christmas is to meet his one-year-old twin grandchildren, Vivienne and Knox Jolie-Pitt, he tells OK! Magazine. "That will be my Christmas wish," he says. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

SATC stars not exactly BFFs off-screen?

KEEP YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE... The sequel to the Sex and the City movie is in full swing, with production moving to Morocco for seven weeks, but the four stars are only spending time together on-camera, according to the New York Post's Cindy Adams, who says Sarah Jessica Parker and Cynthia Nixon are staying at different hotels. And while Kristin Davis and Kim Cattrall are both staying at the Amenjena Hotel, they're avoiding each other as well, even dining separately in the hotel restaurant.

METRO WORLD NEWS

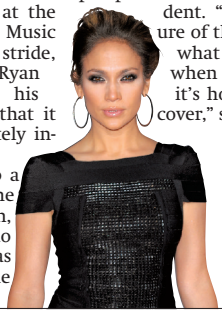


J.Lo opens up about her infamous AMA tumble

NOW IT'S JUST HER JOKES FALLING FLAT Jennifer Lopez is taking her tumble onstage at the American Music Awards in stride, joking with Ryan Seacrest on his radio show that it was completely intentional.

"Did I trip a little bit?" she laughs. "Yeah, I meant to do that. That was part of the choreography." On the serious side, Lopez is keeping perspective on the accident. "the measure of things isn't what happens when you fall, it's how you recover," she says.

METRO WORLD NEWS



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Richie still laid up in bed, but strong enough to type

TWEET RX Although back from the hospital, Nicole Richie says she's still home after a bout with pneumonia. "Right now it's important for me to stay in bed and recover," Richie wrote on her blog.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Gaga has 'no time' for men or drugs, says friend

TOO MANY BAD ROMANCES? Lady Gaga had stopped taking drugs and didn't have time for men by the time she was 20, her friend has revealed, as femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Despite her claims to a life of wild partying and casual sex, the singer's best pal DJ Lady Starlight claims she was solely focused on her music when she first met her at her 20th birthday party.

Starlight said in an interview: "It was obvious even then that Gaga was going to be famous. She was incredibly focused on exactly what she wanted to do."

"I know she's talked about doing lots of drugs but by the time we met she had stopped all that. She didn't even have time for boyfriends."

Lady Starlight, 33, also revealed she and Lady Gaga, 23, always experimented with fashion and tried to create the wildest stage outfits they could dream up — though they would often not last through a show.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity tweets

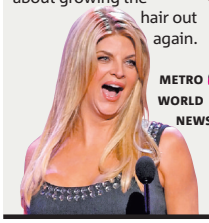
Kirstie Alley is sympathizing with the birds, Rania Al Abdullah has some Twilight content suggestions, and Ashton Kutcher is pondering the really big issues.

• @kirstiealley GOOD MORNING DECAPITATED TURKEYS...sad but true, this is NOT the season for our gobbler friends to be jolly.

• @QueenRania Finally watched New Moon (for my teenage kids' sake, of course). That poor girl, no 1 should hve limited choice between vampire and wolf! Next time they should throw mummies, harpies or ogers in the mix. A girl's gotta have choices!

• @aplusk thinking about growing the hair out again.

METRO WORLD NEWS



Demi's cover photo mystery deepens

CHEAPER THAN MORE SURGERY The scandal brewing over whether Demi Moore's photo on the cover of W was doctored has reached a new level. The blog Pop Culture Madness has uncovered evidence that they claim proves Moore's head was simply attached to the body of 26-year-old model Anja Rubik. Moore, who was vocal about the scandal before via her Twitter account, has yet to address the latest claims.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Lambert answers his critics

SO WHAT? HE'S STILL A ROCK STAR Adam Lambert knows that, as a performer with an over-the-top stage act, audiences are going to love him or hate him — and he's fine with either, people.com reports.

"I could be somebody's role model, but on the flip side I could be somebody's worst nightmare at the same time," the singer, 27, tells Popeater. "You never know how you're going to affect people, being in this position."

METRO WORLD NEWS

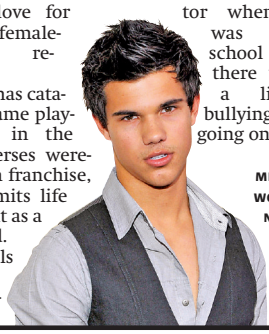
Twilight star says he was bullied at school

REVENGE OF THE NERD Taylor Lautner was bullied at school over his love for acting, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The star has catapulted to fame playing Jacob in the vampire verses werewolves film franchise, but he admits life was difficult as a drama nerd.

He tells Rolling Stone magazine, "I was never extremely confident. Because I was an actor when I was in school there was a little bullying going on.

METRO WORLD NEWS



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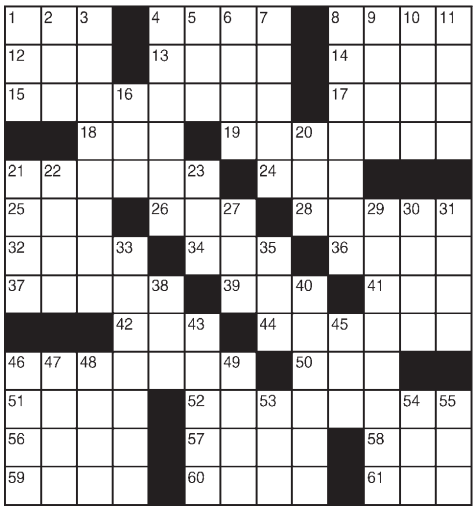


Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	7						6	
	4	8		2		5	9	
2			1		8			3
		7	8		2	6		
		1	5		4	3		
5			9		7			8
	6	9		3		2	5	
	1						4	

ACROSS

1 Pouch
4 Crooner Perry
8 Cribbage scorekeepers
12 Berlin's "What'll ____?"
13 Paper quantity
14 Bound
15 Trade
17 ____ mater
18 Central
19 Israeli parliament
21 Toxic hydrocarbon
24 Perched
25 Toss in
26 Uncle, south of the border
28 Sounds from grandfather?
32 Cry
34 Saloon
36 Scoop holder
37 Twangy
39 Beam of light
41 Culpa preceder
42 Clampett patriarch
44 Cyclist's protection
46 A, C or E
50 Mermaid's realm
51 Grad
52 Shared
56 Actress Sorvino
57 Duel tool
58 Conk out
59 Nerd-pack contents
60 Stitched together
61 Mined-over matter

DOWN

1 Bracketed word
2 Commotion
3 Low chest of drawers
4 One way to pay
5 "___ the fields we go"
6 Big name in trucks
7 Portents
8 Barbie's makeup?
9 Morays, e.g.
10 Ready for action
11 Lovers' quarrel
16 Blend
20 Chow down
21 Sunrise
22 Notion
23 Pinch
27 "___ Town"
29 Shock trooper
30 Dandling site
31 Chair part
33 Nightwear
35 "Humbug!"
38 Moon vehicle
40 Sycophants
43 Chops into cubes
45 Romanian money
46 Temptress
47 Nastase of tennis
48 Swerve
49 "Unh-unh"
53 Kitten's comment
54 Balloon fill
55 Novelist Harper

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

B	R	O	■	A	L	B	A	■
L	A	P	■	B	O	O	T	■
O	V	A	■	S	P	O	O	N
C	E	L	L	O	■	■	M	A
■	■	■	O	R	C	A	■	P
S	N	O	W	B	A	L	L	■
A	I	M	■	S	N	O	O	D
S	L	I	M	■	T	A	C	O
S	E	T	A	E	■	D	O	U
■	■	■	L	E	A	■	■	G
P	A	P	A	L	B	U	L	L
O	P	E	D	■	I	K	E	A
D	E	W	Y	■	T	E	E	S

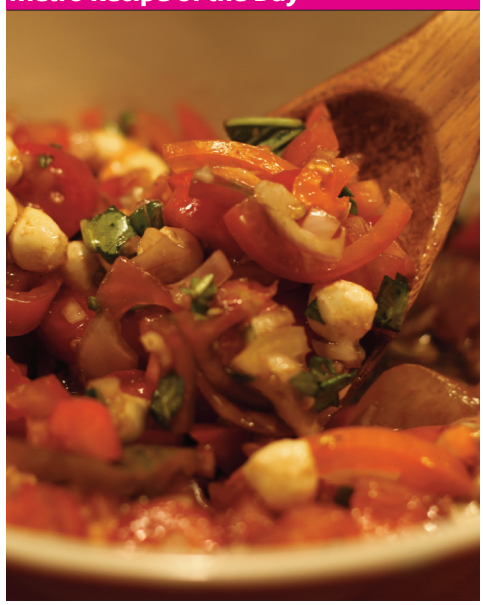
B	A	T	H	■	■	■	■	■
I	L	I	A	■	■	■	■	■
B	I	L	L	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
P	E	S	T	O	■	■	■	■
■	S	O	A	R	■	■	■	■
M	I	A	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
G	A	V	E	L	■	■	■	■
■	E	W	E	■	■	■	■	■
T	E	A	■	■	■	■	■	■
O	R	K	■	■	■	■	■	■

5	1	2	4	8	9	6	3	7
6	4	3	5	7	2	8	1	9
7	8	9	6	1	3	5	2	4
4	3	8	7	2	6	9	5	1
2	6	7	1	9	5	4	8	3
9	5	1	8	3	4	2	7	6
3	7	5	9	4	8	1	6	2
8	2	4	3	6	1	7	9	5
1	9	6	2	5	7	3	4	8

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca

Metro Recipe of the Day



Tomato & Basil Salad

Submitted by Irene Leung, Port Dover, ON

INGREDIENTS:

5 tomatoes or a combination of cherry and regular tomatoes
10 tablespoons of chopped fresh basil
2 small red onions or shallots
1 cup of mini bocconcini cheese balls
4 tablespoons of good quality balsamic vinegar
7 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil

METHOD:

1. Wash and dice tomatoes
2. Chop fresh herbs
3. Peel and dice onions
4. Combine vinegar, oil, and basil and toss to taste in a large non-reactive bowl
5. Add tomatoes, shallots, bocconcini cheese and toss to coat
6. Serve right away, or let the dish sit for about an hour in the fridge to marry the flavours

SERVES 2
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 0 MINUTES

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Someone you meet over the next 24 hours will inspire you creatively and maybe romantically too.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
What someone tells you today might sound like good advice but the chances are they are thinking more about themselves than about you.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
No matter how much you have planned ahead there will be disruptions today and you are likely to get annoyed with people who let you down.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
You seem to be in two minds about whether to push ahead with something you know is right for you but may be wrong for other people.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
Someone you are fond of has got themselves into a lot of unnecessary trouble. Be sympathetic but make sure they learn from it too.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Don't be afraid to disagree with someone in a higher position today because if you don't they will make other demands you find difficult to accept.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Although you may be willing to change your plans to help a friend in need you must not think you are obliged to do so.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Make out that you are not really bothered what loved ones are up to today, even though you may be angry because they did not consult you first.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
The journey you have embarked on may be long and there may be no guarantees, but there is little doubt that you will get there.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
Don't plan too far ahead today because even routine matters are likely to change. Your time will come, maybe not today but soon.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
According to the planets you are about to discover that your sympathy for someone you thought was in trouble was misplaced to say the least.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Nothing negative is going to happen today, so don't let your imagination run riot.

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This day in history

1789: A national Thanksgiving Day is observed in the United States as recommended by George Washington.
1842: The University of Notre Dame is founded.
1922: Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon become the first people to enter the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun in over 3000 years.
1998: Tony Blair becomes the first Prime Minister of the U.K. to address the Republic of Ireland's parliament.
2008: Ten co-ordinated attacks by Pakistan-based terrorists kill 164 and injure more than 250 in Mumbai, India.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: **metronews.ca/food**

Take Five

Metro Recipes of the Day

RYAN PFEIFFER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

RYAN PFEIFFER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mediterranean Shepherd's pie, left, with ground lamb, olives and crumbled feta, right, Brewed Beef with Root Vegetables.

Mediterranean Shepherd's Pie

INGREDIENTS:

15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
1.5 kg (3 lb) ground lamb
2 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
2 ml (1/2 tsp) cracked black pepper
3 cloves garlic, minced
30 ml (2 tbsp) tomato paste
125 ml (1/2 cup) red wine
125 ml (1/2 cup) chicken broth
1 can (796 ml/28 oz) diced tomatoes
1 sprig fresh rosemary
125 ml (1/2 cup) chopped kalamata olives
50 ml (1/4 cup) chopped fresh parsley
Polenta
750 ml (3 cups) water
500 ml (2 cups) ground polenta
750 ml (3 cups) cold milk
5 ml (1 tsp) salt
250 ml (1 cup) fresh grated Parmesan cheese
30 ml (2 tbsp) butter

METHOD:

1) Preheat oven to 190 C (375 F).
2) In a large deep skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat.
3) Add onions and cook, stirring often, until tender and golden, about 10 minutes.
4) Add lamb and cook, breaking up pieces with the back of a spoon, until browned and no pink remains, about 10 minutes.
5) Drain any fat; season with salt and pepper. Add garlic and tomato paste and cook for 1 minute.
6) Add wine and simmer until it is reduced by half.
7) Add broth, tomatoes and rosemary. Adjust heat to maintain a simmer, stirring occasionally until sauce thickens and coats meat, about 15 minutes.
8) Remove from heat. Stir in olives and parsley. Meanwhile, in a large saucepan over high heat, bring water to a boil.
9) Stir in polenta, milk and salt, stirring constantly, until smooth and polenta begins to thicken, about 15 minutes.
10) Reduce heat to medium and cook until polenta begins to bubble and pop, about 10 minutes.
11) Reduce heat to low, stir in Parmesan and butter, continuing to stir until polenta pulls away from sides of the pan, about 10 minutes.
12) To assemble: Spread lamb filling into a 3-l (9-by-13-inch) baking dish.
13) Drop large spoonfuls of polenta evenly over surface of lamb and gently spread to get an even layer.
14) Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until polenta is golden and filling is bubbling around edges. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

MAKES 10-12 SERVINGS

Brewed Beef with Root Vegetables

INGREDIENTS:

2 slices bacon, finely diced
500 g (1 lb) beef blade or cross rib simmering steak, cut into quarters
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 medium onions, thinly sliced
30 ml (2 tbsp) all-purpose flour
10 ml (2 tsp) white wine vinegar
2 ml (1/2 tsp) granulated sugar
5 ml (1 tsp) dried thyme
1 can (284 ml) undiluted beef broth
1 bottle (341 ml) beer
Bay leaves
Roasted Root Vegetables

METHOD:

1)In Dutch oven or stockpot, cook bacon over medium-high heat until crisp; transfer to slow cooker.
2) Season steak with salt and pepper; brown in bacon drippings in Dutch oven and transfer to slow cooker.
3) Add garlic and onions to Dutch oven; cook over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4) Stir in flour; cook for 1 minute.
5) Add vinegar, sugar, thyme, beef broth, beer and bay leaves; bring to a simmer.
6) Pour over beef in slow cooker. Cover and slow cook on low for 8 hours or until fork-tender.
7) Serve with Roasted Root Vegetables.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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2010 SONATA GL — SELL DOWN

ANNOUNCING A NEW LOWER PRICE

LAST MONTH'S PRICE ~~$18,999~~

NOW FROM $17,999¥ WITH 0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 36 MOS.◊

Limited model shown

2009 ELANTRA L

LAST YEAR'S STARTING PRICE ~~$15,845~~

NOW FROM $11,995♦ WITH 0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 36 MOS.◊

Limited model shown

2009 TUCSON L

LAST YEAR'S STARTING PRICE ~~$21,195~~

NOW FROM $17,995♦ WITH 0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 48 MOS.◊

Limited model shown

2009 SANTA FE 2.7L GL

LAST YEAR'S STARTING PRICE ~~$25,995~~

NOW FROM $21,995♦ WITH 0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 48 MOS.◊

Limited model shown

THE 2010s ARE HERE.

0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR UP TO 60 MONTHS ON SELECT 2010s.

2010 ACCENT L 3DR

0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 60 MOS.◊

OR LEASE FROM $194** AT 1.3% WITH $0 DOWN PAYMENT

ANNUAL LEASE RATE FOR 60 MOS. DELIVERY & DESTINATION INCL.

GL Sport model shown

2010 ELANTRA TOURING L

FROM $14,999Ψ WITH 0% PURCHASE FINANCING FOR 36 MOS.◊

OR LEASE FROM $217** AT 3.75% WITH $0 DOWN PAYMENT

ANNUAL LEASE RATE FOR 60 MOS. DELIVERY & DESTINATION INCL.

GLS Sport model shown

HYUNDAI CLEAN AIR COMMITMENT

PLUS GET UP TO $1,000‡ IN ADDITIONAL SAVINGS

WHEN YOU TURN IN YOUR 1995 MODEL YEAR OR OLDER VEHICLE.

Visit **hyundaicanada.com** for more Clean Air Commitment information or to locate your local Hyundai dealer.

5 YEAR 100,000 KM WARRANTY

COMPREHENSIVE LIMITED WARRANTY††

HYUNDAI™

GRADUATE REBATE PROGRAM

"The Hyundai names, logos, product names, feature names, images and slogans are trade marks owned by Hyundai Auto Canada Corp., and used under licence. ¥Last months's price is the price as of October 2009 for a 2010 Sonata GL 5-speed. Price for model shown: 2010 Sonata V6 Limited model shown is $29,499. ♦Last year's starting price is the lease/finance starting price as of December 2008 for a 2009 Elantra L/2009 Tucson L/2009 Santa Fe 2.7L GL. Prices for models shown: 2009 Elantra Limited of $20,295/2009 Tucson Limited of $27,495/2009 Santa Fe Limited of $32,445. ψPrices for models shown: 2010 Accent 3 DR GL Short 5-speed $16,999/2010 Elantra Touring GLS Sport 5-speed $21,699. ¥‡‡Delivery and Destination charges of $1,565 for 2010 Sonata/$1,495 for 2009 Elantra/$1,765 for 2009 Tucson / $1,765 for 2009 Santa Fe/$1,495 for 2010 Accent/$1,495 for 2010 Elantra Touring, registration, insurance, license fees and taxes are excluded. Delivery and destination charges includes freight, P.D.E., dealer admin fees and a full tank of gas. ◊Purchase financing available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services on 2010 Sonata/2009 Elantra/2009 Tucson/2009 Santa Fe/2010 Accent 3 DR/2010 Elantra Touring models with 0% APR for 36/48/60/36 month terms. Financing rate is 0% for 36/48/60/36 months on 2010 Elantra L 5-speed $16,995 at 0% per annum for a 60/60 month walk-away lease. Down Payment of $0/$0 and first monthly payment required. Total lease obligation is $11,640/$13,020. Lease offers include Delivery and Destination of $1,495/$1,495. Applicable license fees, insurance, registration, PPSA ($45), and taxes are excluded. $0 security deposit on all models. 20,000 km allowance per year applies. Additional charge of $0.10/km. Delivery and Destination charge includes freight, P.D.E., dealer admin fees and a full tank of gas. ♦♦φ"Offers available for a limited time and subject to change or cancellation without notice. See dealer for complete details. Dealer may sell for less. Inventory is limited, dealer order may be required. ‡You may qualify for an additional incentive ($200 in B.C.) if you turn in your 1995 model year and older vehicle and participate in the National Retire Your Ride program, funded by the Government of Canada. To qualify, your vehicle must be 1995 model year or older, in running condition and fully registered and insured in the participant's province for the last 6 consecutive months (12 months in B.C.). Upon confirmation of eligibility for the Retire Your Ride program, Hyundai Auto Canada will provide an additional Clean Air Cash that must be applied to the purchase of a new Hyundai vehicle in the amount of ($500 - 2009 Accent / $500 - 2009 Elantra sedan / $500 - 2009 Elantra Touring / $500 - 2009 Tucson / $500 - 2009 Santa Fe / $1,000 - 2009 Genesis Sedan / $1,000 - 2009 Veracruz / $1,000 - 2009 Azera / $500 - 2010 Accent / $500 - 2010 Elantra sedan / $500 - 2010 Elantra Touring / $500 - 2010 Genesis Coupe / $500 - 2010 Sonata / $1,000 - 2010 Veracruz. Clean Air Cash will be applied to reduce the after-tax purchase price of your new Hyundai vehicle. By participating in this program you will not be eligible for any trade-in value for your old vehicle. For more information about the Retire Your Ride Program visit www.retireyourride.ca. Some conditions apply, see dealer for details. ‡‡See your dealer for eligible vehicles and full details of the Graduate Rebate Program. ††Hyundai's Comprehensive Limited Warranty coverage covers most vehicle components against defects in workmanship under normal use and maintenance conditions.